

PREFACE

A BOOK that traverses so vast a field as the whole of English history in the course of seven hundred pages is apt to be either a text-book or an essay. It can in no case be a full narrative of events. This work is an essay in so far as it attempts to analyze the social development of the nation in relation to economic conditions, political institutions, and overseas activities. It is a text-book in so far as it preserves the narrative form in brief, deals in dates, Irish, Welsh, and overseas Imperial history are Scottish, I trust not in all cases from too English a point of view. But what unity the book has, especially in its earlier parts, is necessarily derived from England as the centre. Not to arouse expectations which I may not fulfil, I have called the book merely a History of England.

The original nucleus out of which the work has grown was the Lowell Lectures which I had the honour of delivering in Boston, Mass., in the spring of 1924. I therefore dedicate the book in its present form to President Lowell of Harvard and my other kind hosts on that occasion.

I am greatly indebted to two friends at the older Cambridge, Dr. Clapham of King's, and Mr. Claude Elliott of Jesus: to the former for allowing me to see the early part of his *Economic History of Modern Britain* before it went to press, a privilege of which I have made extensive use; and to Mr. Elliott for reading the earlier half of my work and giving me valuable advice on numerous points.

G. M. TREVELYAN

BERKHAMSTED,
April 1926.

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

The frontispiece map of Celtic and Roman Britain is based upon the Ordnance Survey Map, with the sanction of the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office.

INTRODUCTION

THE history of civilized man in our country is very old; it begins long before the reign of Alfred. But the history of Britain as a leader in the world's affairs is of much shorter date; it begins with the reign of Elizabeth. The reason can be read upon the map. Map-makers, whether in ancient Alexandria or in mediæval monasteries, placed our island on the north-west edge of all things. But, after the discovery of America and the ocean routes to Africa and the East, Britain lay in the centre of the new maritime movement. This change in her geographic outlook was employed to good purpose by her inhabitants, who in the era of the Stuarts made her the chief seat of the new trans-oceanic commerce and of the finance and industry that sustained it. Next, with the aid of modern science, the land of Newton applied machinery to manufacture and began the world-wide Industrial Revolution. Meanwhile, Britain was peopling and giving laws to North America; and after she had lost the Thirteen Colonies, she built up a second Empire, more widely scattered and more vast.

These latter centuries of material growth and leadership correspond with the period of greatest intellectual achievement. In spite of Bede, Roger Bacon, Chaucer and Wycliffe, Britain's contribution to mediæval science and literature is slight when compared to the world of her intellectual creation from the time of Shakespeare onward. The era when London awoke to find herself the maritime centre of the suddenly expanded globe, was also the era of the Renaissance and the Reformation—movements of intellectual growth and individual self-assertion which proved more congenial to the British than to many other races, and seemed to emancipate the island genius.

In the sphere of pure politics Britain is famous as the mother of Parliaments. In answer to the instincts and temperament of her people, she evolved in the course of centuries a system which reconciled three things that other nations have often found incompatible—executive efficiency, popular control, and personal freedom.

It is indeed in the Middle Ages that we must seek the origin

INTRODUCTION

survey of the pre-Tudor epochs. The mingling of the armed races poured into Britain from the earliest times until 1066, and the national temper and customs which they developed in the shelter of the island guarded by the Norman and Plantagenet Kings, alone rendered it possible for five millions of people, ruled by Elizabeth, to lay hold on the splendid future offered to themselves and their descendants by the maritime discoveries and intellectual movements of that age. If the hour then came, the men, too, were ready.

Britain has always owed her fortunes to the sea, and to the havens and rivers that from the earliest times opened her inland regions to what the sea might bring. Long before she aspired to rule the waves she was herself their subject, for her destiny was continually being decided by the boat-crews which they floated to her shore. From Iberian and Celtic to Saxon and Danish settlers, from pre-historic and Phœnician traders to Roman and Norman overlords, successive tides of warlike colonists, the most energetic seamen, farmers and merchants of Europe came by the wave-path to inhabit her, or to instil their knowledge and spirit into the older inhabitants. Her east coast lay obvious and open to Teuton and Scandinavian immigrants; her south coast to cultural influences from the Mediterranean by way of France. From Teuton and Scandinavian she acquired the important part of her population and character and the language; from the South she received the rest of her culture, and much of her organizing power.

The Norman Conquest severed her ties with Scandinavia, which Canute had drawn very close. For several hundred years the Nordic islanders were governed by a French-speaking aristocracy and a Latin-speaking clergy. By a significant paradox it was under this foreign leadership that the English began to develop their intense national feeling and their peculiar institutions, so different in spirit from those of Italy and France. Already among the fellow-countrymen of Chaucer and Wycliffe, even when engaged in the disastrous adventure of the Hundred Years' War, we see the beginnings of a distinct English nationality, far richer than the old Saxon, composed of many different elements of race, character and culture which the tides of ages had brought to our coasts and the island climate had tempered and mellowed into harmony. At the Reformation the English, grown to manhood, dismissed their Latin tutors, without reacting into close contact with the Scandinavian and Teuton world. Britain had become a world by itself.

INTRODUCTION

It was at this crisis in England's cultural and political growth when she was weakening her ties with Europe, that the union with Scotland came about, and at the same time the ocean offered the islanders a pathway to every corner of the newly discovered globe. The universality of the Englishman's experience and outlook—quite as marked a characteristic as his insularity—is due to his command of the ocean which has for more than three centuries past carried him as explorer, trader, and colonist to every shore in the two hemispheres. Thus, in early times, the relation of Britain to the sea was passive and receptive; in modern times, active and acquisitive. In both it is the key to her story.

HISTORY OF ENGLAND

BOOK I

THE MINGLING OF THE RACES. FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE NORMAN CONQUEST

INTRODUCTION

It is a commonplace to say that the British are a people of mixed blood. I hope, in this First Book, to indicate a little how, when and why this mingling of races occurred.

It may be as well to say, at the outset, that the entrance into our island of the races who people it to-day was completed in main outline at the time of the Norman Conquest. With that event, which itself made less racial than social and cultural change, we come to an end of migratory invasions and of forced entry behind the point of the sword. Since Hastings there has been nothing more catastrophic than a slow, peaceful infiltration of alien craftsmen and labourers,—Flemings, Huguenots, Irish and others,—with the acquiescence of the existing inhabitants of the island.

To invade Britain was singularly easy before the Norman Conquest, singularly difficult afterwards. The reason is clear. A well-organized State, with a united people on land and a naval force at sea, could make itself safe behind the Channel even against such military odds as Philip of Spain, Louis XIV. or Napoleon could assemble on the opposite shore. In recent centuries these conditions have been fulfilled, and although an invading force has sometimes been welcomed, as when Henry Tudor or William of Orange came over, no invasion hostile to the community as a whole has met with even partial success owing to the barrier of the sea. But, before the Norman Conquest, there had been long ages when neither the island State nor the island navy was formidable; even in the days of Alfred and Harold they were inadequate to their task, and in earlier times they did not exist. Except when protected by the Roman galleys and legions, ancient Britain was peculiarly liable to invasion for geographic and other reasons.

THE ISLAND

identified with the flora and fauna of Northern Europe—except for the red grouse peculiar to the British Isles. Ireland was cut adrift from England before the piercing of the Dover Straits by the sea, and is, for that reason, poorer in mammals, plants and reptiles.

For many centuries after Britain became an island the untamed forest was king. Its moist and mossy floor was hidden from heaven's eye by a close-drawn curtain woven of innumerable tree-tops, which shivered in the breezes of summer dawn and broke into wild music of millions of waking birds; the concert was prolonged from bough to bough with scarcely a break for hundreds of miles over hill and plain and mountain, unheard by man save where, at rarest intervals, a troop of skin-clad hunters, stone-axe in hand, moved furtively over the ground beneath, ignorant that they lived upon an island, not dreaming that there could be other parts of the world besides this damp green woodland with its meres and marshes, wherein they hunted, a terror to its four-footed inhabitants and themselves afraid.

A glance at any physical map will show how Britain has always thrust out towards the continent of Europe a low coast with an undulating plain behind, easy of access through many havens and navigable rivers. It was only westward and northward, against the Atlantic, that the island presented a mountainous and iron-bound coast—though even there the mouths of Severn, Dee, Mersey, Clyde and other lesser inlets held the makings of future history. But, from the earliest ages the flat south and east coastlines with the plains and low ridges behind them presented, so long as they were unguarded by a fleet, a standing temptation to the migratory tribes, pirates, plunderers and raders roaming along the island lay not only in the pearls, the gold and the tin for which it seems to have been noted among certain Mediterranean merchants long before the foundation of Rome; temptation lay also in its fertile soil, the rich carpet of perennial green that covered the downs and every clearing in the forest, the absence of long interludes of frost that must have seemed miraculous in a land so far to the North before men knew the secret of the Gulf Stream.¹

¹ Both Cæsar and Tacitus remark on the absence of severe cold in Britain, though Tacitus adds: 'the sky is overcast with continual rain and cloud.' The rapid changes of weather and temperature in Britain, a source of bitter merriment to its inhabitants in every age, stimulate the physical and mental energies, and 'make us Englishmen.' It is, in fact, one of the higher values of the land, but it can hardly have been one of the temptations to would-be invaders!

THE ISLAND AND ITS INVADERS

localities that were neither marshy nor encumbered by trees, nor yet mere barren heath.¹

Such were the attractions of this desirable land. And it stood, obvious to all, as centre to the grand semi-circle of the North European shore that stretches for two thousand miles from Norway to Ushant. From times long before the dawn of history until the Norman Conquest, all the various seafaring tribes who succeeded each other as nomads or settlers on any part of that great coastline regarded Britain as their natural prey. And Britain was the more subject to their attacks because the pressure of the folk wanderings was mainly from the East of Europe to the West. It followed, that for several thousands of years, wave after wave of seagoing adventurous races, or of Britain's southern and eastern shore, was flung upon the worst natural obstacle they could meet was the widespread woodland and marsh. But where the forest was pathless or the valley too wet, the invader could either row up the river or trek round by the heaths and downs. The high-placed camps, roads and dew-ponds of the primitive peoples, often found where only the sheep and plovers now congregate, remind us of the greater part which the bare uplands played in the life of man, before the forests were felled and the valleys drained.

The first serious geographic obstacle appeared when the invader, perhaps in the second or third generation of his advance, at length approached the north or west of the island—the mountain ranges of Wales, of North-West England and of Scotland. Here the pursued might rally and the pursuers be forced to halt. If there had been no such mountain ranges, if England had been all one lowland, each successive invasion would have rapidly overrun the whole island. In that case no racial difference might to-day be discernible such as divides so-called Celtic Britain—Wales and the Scottish Highlands—on the one hand, Saxon districts on the other, for the primitive Saxons

ance, in Cambridgeshire, successive civilizations of flint-users had on the sandy heath uplands on the border of the fens where Mildenhalls. See Map I., p. 8, below. But when the bronze and iron age, owing to the greater importance of agriculture. The shores of the Cam were not water-logged or forest-bound, and were better soil for Mildenhall heaths; so population gradually followed the plough up the valley, owing to the forest narrowness of the forest area. But though the forest seems to have been made to encroach on the greater part of the upland country which is now so bare of wood and so characteristic of agricultural Cambridgeshire. See the remarkable work of Mr. Cyril Fox—*The Prehistoric Archaeology of the Cambridge Region*.

THE IBERIANS

'Iberian' blood probably flows in the veins of every modern Englishman, more in the average Scot, most in the Welsh and Irish. The Iberians were no mere savages. They raised themselves, during the long stone and bronze ages in Britain, from vagary onto the first steps of civilized life. At first hunters and to which man can turn the dog, the sheep, the goat, the ox, the pig; they adopted the use of metals; they became the men of the bronze age skilled in weaving and in crafts of many kinds, including agriculture. If in earlier times the largest political unit consisted of a tribe of a few hundred souls, living in dread of wolves and bears, and of their nearest human neighbours, the Iberians acquired in some parts of the country a much higher political organization, designed gigantic earthworks like the Maiden Castle near Dorchester on a scientific military plan, and reared Stonehenge, no mean engineering feat. Although the earliest of them had come over in coracles or canoes, they learnt to build the 'long-ship' or low war-galley.

Many of these improvements, especially agriculture, metal work and long-ship building, were probably taught to the islanders by merchants from the distant South, or by continental tribes who had learnt from those merchants. The Levant was the cradle of European civilization. The inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Egypt and Crete, in days before Tyre, Athens or Rome, evolved agriculture, metal-craft, shipbuilding and many other of the arts of life. Such Promethean secrets, starting on their journey from South and East, handed on from trader to trader and from tribe to tribe ever northward and westward across the forests of barbarous Europe, or travelling more quickly by merchant galleys round the Pillars of Hercules, reached at last those half fabulous 'tin islands' in the mists and tides of the northern seas. The trade of Britain with the Levant, or rather of the Levant with Britain, is far older than the Celtic Conquest. English jet found in Spain is believed to date from 2500 B.C. and Egyptian beads found in England from about 1300 B.C. So early, perhaps much earlier, the Mediterranean traders had discovered the British islands with their wealth of pearls and gold, to-day long exhausted, and their metals, not yet at an end. But if these eastern merchants have the credit of bringing civilization to Britain, the Iberian tribesmen had the wit to adapt their teaching. Either the traders, or else some conquering race, brought from overseas the first weapons of bronze that have been discovered in the island. But since copper and tin both lay near the surface in different parts of the island, particularly Cornwall, the natives were soon taught to smelt the two together and so

TRACKS AND TRADE ROUTES

make bronze for themselves. After that, the end of the long stone age was in sight; it was only a matter of time before bronze, and iron after it, was lord of all. Some of the islanders attained high technical skill in metal working, and indeed some of the finest enamel work on bronze that the world contains was produced by these Iberian ancestors of ours. Many of the centres of this ancient civilization—Stonehenge perhaps—were placed on sites agriculturally barren, but once famous for the best flints or for surface gold, tin or copper, long since exhausted.

Trade routes and trade connections grew up within the island itself between very distant tribes; and there were ports trading with Ireland for gold, and others that shipped tin to the continent. Ancient trackways, running along bare downs and ridges, linked up the various centres of civilization which were otherwise separated by wide morasses and long leagues of forest. The route of the trackways, long afterwards known and more years ago, and tangled forest of the plain, like the track along the edge of the chalk downs, below the top of the tableland but above the marshy edge of the North Downs, long afterwards known and used as the 'Pilgrims' Way' to Canterbury, and still at places available to the pedestrian as it was four thousand and more years ago.

So too, ages before the arrival of the Celt, the Icknield Way ran along the chalk close under the ridge of the Chilterns, and was carried on westward by the line of the downs south of Thames; its object was to join up the great downland civilization gathered round the circles of Avebury and Stonehenge, where man was most thickly congregated, because there he was most free from the impediment of forest and of marsh. The forest, still impetrable save by a few daring hunters, lay deep on both sides of the Icknield Way. Ideas and arts of vast import to man have been carried along its springy turf by wayfarers listening anxiously to the noises of the forest, to distinguish the howl of wolves, the growl of bears or the yet more dreaded voice of hostile tribesmen.

From the seventh to the third centuries before Christ, the Celtic tribes, originally occupying North-western Germany and the Netherlands, were moving across Europe in many different directions. In the first centuries after Christ the Teuton tribes, starting from homes rather further to the East, were destined to move over much the same ground in much the same manner; but between the folk-wanderings of Celt and of Teuton was to be interposed the great event of the Roman penetration north of the Alps.

THE CELTIC CIVILIZATION

physique and colouring seem chiefly Iberian. The proportion of Celtic to Iberian blood is very small in the Welsh mountains. How far it was the same in the richer eastern portions of Britain at the time of Roman and Saxon invasions, there is no means determining. It is equally impossible to know what form the Celtic conquerors gave to their economic and social relations with the conquered Iberians. In Wales there long remained traces, which some archæologists at least thought they detected, of a system by which certain hamlets were left to the conquered, and others reserved for the conquerors, the former paying a heavier tribute. But it would be rash to conclude that such a system was universal in the east. Slavery or serfdom may have been commoner in the east.

The Celts, like the Iberians before them, remained tribesmen or clansmen, bound together by legal and sentimental ties of kinship as the moral basis of society. Unlike the Saxons after them, they developed no strictly territorial, still less any feudal organization. A thousand years after England had been subjected to Saxon conquest, Wales, Ireland and the Scottish Highlands were in different degrees still governed by the tribal rules of life. And we may be sure that in the palmy day of Celtic lordship in the British Isles, the Kings were tribal chiefs, rather than territorial or feudal monarchs. Justice was the justice of the clan, which punished and protected its members, exacting on their behalf from other clans either vengeance, or else payment in reparation for injuries done. The Celtic tribes, when the Romans came over, were perpetually at war with one another, but they formed large accretions, each tribe being spread over a considerable area, often equal to several modern counties.

Agriculture continued to progress slowly in the iron age under the Celts, as in the bronze age under the Ibrians. Wheat was sown in the south, oats further north—as to-day. The Celt loved to cheer or fuddle his brain with mead—grain fermented with honey. But the acreage under plough was small, for the forests remained unfelled, and those river valleys, like Thames and Trent, where drainage was a necessary prelude to close habitation, remained marshy and sparsely peopled. Herds of swine wandering by thousands through the virgin oak forests were a feature of Celtic and Norman times and must have been no less a feature of Saxon and pre-Celtic economy. Pig in various forms is still favourite feeding in England, and in primitive times it was the staff of life not only in Ireland but in Britain. Sheep and oxen were perhaps the chief source of accumulated wealth and the chief means of barter. Horses

sea with its white surf, dashing up against the apex of this vast triangle? Looking to the eastward of that apex, we see the loveliest of islands, anchored fast by its central mountain, but otherwise looking as if it would float away before any breeze which might fill the foliage of its woods as if it were sails. Fringed with palms, fragrant with spices, gaudy with tropical flowers, a perfect Eden for luscious fruits, Ceylon rises on the south-eastern horizon of that Indian territory, the northern boundary of which is the *Abode of Snow*. It is nearly 2,000 miles from the one to the other. What would the adventurer on the coast have said, if told that his great-grandson might come on his track, and find all this territory in English occupation, and the greater part in possession?

But we have not seen quite all. What is below the rim of the plateau—between it and the sea? There is, on the western side, a strip of land, hot and moist, from sixty to thirty miles broad, easily reached from the sea, but not so easily from the plateau above. The great embankment which supports the table-land of the Deccan is a miniature of the Himálaya range, which supports the plateau of Thibet. A mere rim on the inside—it is a precipice of two or three thousand feet deep on the seaward side. There are few roads down these Ghauts; and, till the British showed the way, it was scarcely possible for the people on the shore to obtain the produce

of the Deccan. It was on that strip of shore that our pioneer Englishman, Stevens, landed in 1593. He saw that steep wall bristling with forests—bamboos waving in the breeze which passed over the summits, and teak-trees being tumbled down by the torrents in their leaping course, after the rains; but he knew nothing of what lay behind that great green wall. The sandy beach of that Malabar coast bristles with cocoa palms, which make a fringe for the margin of the tide. The waterfalls of the Ghauts join the sea by a multitude of small inlets; and here and there a rice-swamp makes a gap in the long hedge of palms. A rocky island of small extent, lying close under a larger island, was an object of attention to our pioneer countryman while on that coast. The Portuguese had obtained it from the potentates of the mainland, valuing it for the goodness of its harbour on that exposed coast, and expressing that value in its name—Good Bay, or Bombay. The Coromandel coast, answering on the east to the Malabar on the west, is less strong in its distinctive features, except the assault of the sea on the shore. The Madras surf is celebrated all over the world. As for the rest, the Ghauts are lower, more broken, and more spread; the line of coast is broader; and all the great rivers, from the Taptee southward, fall into the sea on that coast. South of the basin of the Ganges, five noble streams pour their floods into the Bay of Bengal. The Mahanuddy, the great

Godavery, which cuts a channel for itself right across the Deccan; the Kistna, which does the same lower down; the Panaar; and the Cauvery, which washes the walls of a series of great cities, from Seringapatam to Negapatam. That part of the peninsula is little more than 300 miles wide. In the northern part of this great territory, from the Indus to the Burrampooter, it is not less than 1,500.

What a territory it is!—that which is now British India, but which our pioneer of 1593 would no more have dreamed of our making our own than the Garden of Eden, or the dominions of Prester John! He would have been no less astonished if he could have known that such a territory, being once our own, and the largest dependency ever held by any nation, would not be considered worth study by the British at home till calamity, arising from that levity, should make every nook and corner of it as fearfully interesting to the people at large as the interior of Africa to the Parks of Peebles, and the Polar regions to the Franklin and Kanes. When Stevens returned from having set foot on the coast of Malabar, his countrymen could not hear enough of the great peninsula. Now that it has long been our own, we have not cared enough about it to help our rulers to govern it well. It is time for repentance and amendment.

CHAPTER II.

ANTECEDENTS.

B.C. 4000*—A.D. 1593.

"Thus thou hast seen one world begin and end,
And Man as from a second stock proceed.
Much thou hast yet to see."—MILTON.

If a merchant from Japan were to land in a European port, on a commercial speculation, and be told in a dream that his countrymen would, within three generations, become possessed of the whole continent, except Russia, he would think it the very wildest dream that had ever visited his sleep. Yet a parallel dream, during Stevens's first night at Goa, would have been a true prophecy.

Major Rennell first turned our attention to the relative magnitude of Europe and British India. Rectifying his statement, in accordance with recent changes, we find that our Indian empire slightly exceeds in area, while falling little short in population, the whole of Europe, exclusive of Russia.†

* Hindoo computation.

† Excluding Russia, the excess of the Indian area is 141,150 square miles; and the excess of the European population is under 12,000,000.

It is a great and marvellous conception, even after a century of such feelings as must be excited by an extension of dominion unmatched (all conditions being considered) in history. This vast territory is the abode of nations as numerous and as different from each other in character and language as the nations of Europe. If we lose sight of this, and lump them together as "natives of India," declaring ourselves unable to recognise any difference between one and another, we are simply emulating the ignorance of Asiatics in their occasional travels in the west. They do not know an Italian from a German—a Frenchman, from an Englishman; and we may conceive what would be the chances of success of an Asiatic government of Europe which should proceed on such a view. The main point of education for Anglo-Indian service is the understanding of the conditions and qualities of the peoples to be governed; but that kind of preparation has never had the advantage of popular intelligence and sympathy at home. Nobody has felt an interest in what Indian officials have had to study; nobody has cared to hear what Anglo-Indians have had to tell; and now, when our great dependency is in a state of serious, though partial revolt, most of us at home have everything to learn, when we ought to have been able to judge, suggest, and insist, through the carefully gathered experience and vigilant

of a hundred years. It is probably a new idea to most of us that our Indian empire is almost as large and populous as Europe, and including as many nations, with their languages. When Stevens, who had joined a party of Portuguese to reach Goa, saw what he could from thence, he probably formed a more just estimate of the great peninsula than we have hitherto done; but now, stern events are awakening the interest which has slumbered too long.

What made Stevens go to Goa? One of the agents of the Russian trading company to India was a man of English birth, who had seven times gone down the Volga, and by the Caspian and Persia to Hindostan; what he saw of the wealth of India, and of the scope for commercial adventure there, became known to Stevens, who found enough that was wonderful and tempting to make a most stimulating narrative as soon as he got home. Everybody read his book, and the nation became extremely eager to obtain a commercial footing under the shadow of the Moguls. News from other wanderers began to come in. Of a party of four travellers who had gone to see what they could see, one, named Storey, remained as a monk among the Portuguese at Goa; another, Newberry, died on his way back; a third, Leedes, accepted service under the Emperor Akbar: and only the fourth, Fitch, came home. The London merchants began

their scheme of a company (from which our East India Company has grown) before the new century came in. They raised money, laid plans, and sought Government aid; but the 16th century closed before they could bring their scheme to bear. While awaiting the founding of our first factory, we must therefore survey the new region of society, thus strangely disclosed, with the eyes of Stevens, at Goa, or of Leedes, at Delhi; perhaps of both, as the one certainly saw Hindostan Proper, and the other, no doubt, more or less of the Deccan—regions as distinct, to say the least, as eastern and western Europe. It ought to be at least as interesting to us as it could be to these early adventurers to know who the inhabitants of India were, and what they were like; because we understand what they could never have dreamed of—that our institutions and methods, as rulers in India, must take shape and colour, more or less, from those which were bequeathed to us by our predecessors. It is but little that can be told in such space as can be spared for the purpose here; but the most superficial retrospect ought to be full of instruction.

Behind the history of the Hindoos lies a dim region in which even speculation gropes, and can make no way. Somebody was there, in that singularly fenced region, before the Hindoos came down (as the learned tell us they did) through

the passes from Central Asia: and now and then an ancient monument turns up, or a gem of law or tradition dropped from its setting, or a philological hint sends a flash of disclosure through the darkness of antiquity—all indicating that the predecessors of the Hindoos were wise at a time when the whole earth is supposed to have been barbarous, and that there was at least one great country which swarmed with an organized society in days when we are apt to fancy deep calling to deep, and wildernesses resting in perpetual silence, before Man had appeared to awaken all the voices of Nature. Ascending no higher, it seems to be admitted on all hands that the ancient Hindoos were near the top of the scale of nations in civilization. Their institutions must have been strongly rooted to have stood their ground as they did, under the rule of their Mohammedan conquerors, even so late as Leedes's residence at the Delhi Court; and it is said to be something singular in the history of nations that an idolatry should have been sustained against a comparatively pure religion, as theirs was against Mohammedanism under the Mogul emperors. However that might be, a good observer could easily point out such modifications as the presence of the conquerors had caused in the ideas and manners of the Hindoos, while the wonder was that those modifications were so few and of such minor importance. The bulk of the population was

Hindoo; and the Mohammedan element was almost as distinct as the European is now. This does not imply that Hindoo institutions and manners were not very much changed from their primitive type; but the changes must be imputed much more to the indigenous faults of the antique polity than to the operation of foreign influences. The long duration of the general polity was owing, no doubt, to the large proportion of municipal institutions to the central despotism; but, under a religion which encouraged a passive condition of mind and life, and an institution of caste which obstructed improvement from within, and excluded it from without, deterioration was inevitable, whether it came sooner or later.

Whatever may have been the origin of the Hindoos, and however erroneous their own belief concerning it may be considered, that belief, from time immemorial, has been that Hindostan Proper—the country between the Vindhya mountains and the Himalaya—is their native home. It is to them the “Holy Land;” and they deny that the Deccan has any right to share the title. To say the least, they were nearly at the head of human civilization for a thousand years before our era. Modern scholars are disposed to think that the culminating point of the Hindoo empire, taking all conditions together, was just before the appearance of Alexander the Great on their frontier, though their literature and arts reached a higher perfection afterwards. But little

can be alleged with any certainty prior to the invasions which followed the rise of Mohammedanism.

The Prophet's own wars, and those carried on in his name after his death, were on the whole successful in Persia, and onwards to Cabul, and further eastward still, till they met the thoroughly organized resistance of the Hindoo priesthood. Other faiths and their priests had gone down before the Prophet's sword and battle cry. Here was one which had the support of the throne on the one hand, and popular devotedness on the other; so that the new proselytising religion was nearer meeting its match in India than it had ever been before. The conservatism of the Hindoo polity was a fair antagonist for Mussulman fanaticism. The thorough amalgamation of the Hindoo faith with the whole national and individual life rendered speedy conversion impossible, and made it clear that by violence alone could any empire over the people of Hindostan be obtained and preserved. Thus was the spread of Mohammedanism in India slower and more difficult than anywhere else, long after it had made a lodgment within the territory; the lapse of time tending, meanwhile, to relax the forces of fanaticism, and to turn the warriors of the Prophet from apostles into politicians and princes.

Existing evidence seems to show that the first onset was made by a Hindoo potentate, the Rajah of Lahore, in the tenth century, from alarm at the

encroachments of the Mohammedans established at Ghuznee, under the rule of the father of Sultan Mahmoud. The Ghuznee ruler had the advantage, and Sultan Mahmoud so improved it as to be called the Conqueror of India. While our Canute was blessing England by exalting religion above the clergy, Sultan Mahmoud was making his twelve idol-breaking incursions among the Hindoos, overthrowing their temples, and insulting the idolaters whom he could not convert. He did not establish any regular government in Hindostan, so that the people rushed to their temples as soon as his back was turned; and the dynasty of the intruders was changed, and more than a century and a half had passed, before the conquest became real and permanent. It was not till 1193, when our Cœur-de-Lion was fighting against the children of the Prophet in the Holy Land of Christendom, that the Mohammedans took real possession of the Holy Land of the Hindoos, and set up their banner and their throne at Delhi. Mohammed, the first King of Delhi, stands in Arab history as the founder of the Prophet's empire in Hindostan. Genghis Khan swept past the frontiers of Hindostan repeatedly, but did not enter it. Other Mogul chiefs did, however; and then the Affghan princes reigned at Delhi, and, by the hands of one of them, conquered a chief part of the Deccan. At about the time when Bolingbroke was enforcing the abdication of our Richard II.,

Timur was dethroning the now feeble kings of Delhi. He merely marched through Hindostan to effect this purpose, and left it to his successors to establish a Mogul dynasty there. This was done by his descendant Baber, who took possession of the throne at Delhi in 1526, and founded the Mogul empire in India, extending his dominion to the Ganges, but not improving the condition of his dominions. This was done by Akbar, whose long reign was a blessing to the Hindoos, in comparison with every other since the followers of the Prophet entered their country. His toleration was so great as to contrast favourably with the bigotry of some of the contemporary monarchs of Christendom; for instance, our Queen Mary, whose zeal was waxing and her life waning when Akbar took his seat on the Delhi throne; and the successor of Charles V., who was retiring into his convent just when Akbar was making provision for liberty of opinion among his idolatrous subjects. As always happens in such cases, Akbar was accused of infidelity by his own priests; but his life and his memory were dear to all others. While Wolsey was establishing his influence over our Henry VIII., Akbar, the prince of Mohammedan, as Henry once promised to be of Christian, chivalry, was keeping his high clergy at arm's length, and making himself the protector of the ignorant and the poor against all oppression by all priesthoods. A more gallant monarch, or one more exemplary (when his first wild youth

was passed), or more philosophical in his cabinet, while a true knight in the field, is not upon record in the whole course of history. Queen Elizabeth might be proud of her correspondents if she chanced to write to Henri Quatre and to Akbar on the same day. Leedes and his comrades carried a letter from her to the Emperor at Delhi: and it is probable that Akbar was as eager to hear from his English follower all details of our Queen's good government as the English certainly were to learn from Stevens and Fitch whatever they could tell on their return of the empire and rule of Akbar, the great Mogul.

When Leedes took service at Delhi, Akbar had received the submission of all but one of the princes north of the Vindhya mountains, and on both sides of the Indus; so that he was at liberty to turn southwards, and subjugate the Deccan. Dissensions among the rulers there invited his interposition; but an Indian Joan-of-Arc rendered his task difficult. Chand Bibi, the greatest of Indian heroines, fought in the breach at Ahmednugger, in complete armour, though veiled. Leedes must have heard the Delhi bards tell the stories of her feats at arms on behalf of her infant nephew, which have been the delight of all succeeding generations of listeners; how she loaded her guns first with all her copper coins, then with silver money, and then with gold, and lastly with jewels, before she would make peace; and how she countermined wherever the enemy were approaching, and built up

breaches in the night, and so mauled the foe in the ditch that all parties were glad to come to terms. Her murder by treason was the pathetic catastrophe, and it opened Akbar's way into the Deccan, when he had annexed Candeish by the way. The domestic treason which broke out behind his back, and the long series of family griefs, from the deaths of two sons, and the crimes and quarrels of the others, were matters of public observation; and the Englishman at court could have told his contemporary, Will Shakspeare, some tragedies as deep as any of those exhibited in his historical plays.

Beyond the Court, what was there to be noted? the four Hindoo castes had long been hopelessly confused, so that the accounts given by the members of the lower ones and the histories of the Brahmins were quite irreconcilable. The Brahmins had preserved their lineage; but their occupations and manners had greatly changed. They might be seen engaged in almost every occupation—not only soldiers, but husbandmen—not only expounders of the faith and the Hindoo law, but magistrates and merchants' clerks. Under Mogul government, public business must necessarily be in Mussulman hands, chiefly; but the Brahmins were more concerned with it than when they attended to Menu's commands, and admitted only one of their order to power, as counsellor with the judges, according to the code. The two lower castes of Menu's time, comprehending

the working classes, had become so multiplied that nobody outside of them could pretend to understand their distinctions, any further than as they were a sort of guilds corresponding to branches of industry, and arising out of Menu's assignment of an hereditary occupation to each of the mixed classes. But the members of each of a hundred castes were as strict in preserving their respective frontier lines as the proudest Brahmin ever was in his own case. It had become doubtful whether the lowest, the Sudra caste, was originally a separate tribe; and the intermixture of race had so confused that caste, as that a Brahmin might here and there be found in the service of a Sudra. It could scarcely be said that there was even any servile class remaining; for, though there were slaves, they were not in slavery by caste, but by other circumstances. While some of the phenomena of caste, therefore, met the Englishman's eye in all directions, he could not have given any clear account of the precise state of the institution in his time. The distinctions between the Mohammedans and Hindoos were much more obvious, though already becoming less definite every day.

The township, an institution still abiding where almost everything else has changed, was then the first object of interest to a stranger. The whole territory was portioned off into little republics, each managing its own affairs, while strictly subject to the central power. The office of Headman was

hereditary; and while that officer was called the king's officer, he was virtually the representative of the people, while changes of dynasty were passing over their heads. Under the headmen were the hereditary accountant, watchman, money-changer, priest, astrologer, and bard, or genealogist, besides all the ordinary trades. In some regions, there was an intermediate body representing the township, or constituting it, holding all the rest as tenants, and calling themselves village landholders. As for the abodes of the villagers, Leedes must have easily distinguished the true Hindoo cottage from the abodes which were assuming a Mohammedan appearance. The Hindoo dwelling of bamboo, with its curved thatched roof, and placed, if possible, apart and under trees, contrasted with the Mohammedan cottage or house of clay, or unburnt brick, or stone, with its terraced roof. The Hindoo swathed himself in two scarfs of white cotton or muslin, rubbed his skin with oil, ate rice, thought his lank hair and moustaches a sufficient covering for his head, was conscious of the grace and suppleness of his carriage, and delighted in conversation and indolent and frivolous amusement, while yet his cast of character was quiet and thoughtful. The Mohammedan, on the other hand, covered his head with a turban, and wore trousers, tunic, ornaments, and arms; tiled his roof; ate wheaten bread (unleavened); shut up the women of his family, and

was not much of a talker in society. The Hindoo village had always a bazaar, a market day and an annual fair; one temple and one guesthouse, where the wayfarer might find shelter. Each hut and each mansion had its mat, its earthen pot and dishes, its pestle and mortar, and baking plate, and its shed for cooking. The husbandman prayed and went forth at dawn with his cattle to the field; his wife brought him his hot dinner at noon, and his evenings were spent in smoking and amusement. The women meantime had been grinding and cooking, washing, spinning, and fetching water. In the towns, the tradesmen and artisans lived in brick or stone houses, with shops open to the streets. The bazaar loungers—mendicant priests, smoking soldiers, and saucy bulls which lorded it over everybody—distinguished the towns where the Hindoos predominated; and so did the festivals in which the townspeople took at one draught the pleasure which the villagers spread over all their evenings. The observances at death and burial were unlike those of the conquering race. The Hindoos burned their dead, except those belonging to religious orders; and they seldom or never set up tombs, except to warriors fallen in battle, or widows burned with their husbands. When Leedes was at Delhi widows were not allowed to sacrifice themselves. In almost every other case, Hindoo observances were carefully cherished by Akbar, and Mohammedan peculiarities

were subordinated to them; but in this case he was so resolute (the practice not being authorized by Menu) that he once mounted his horse, and rode a great distance at full speed, to save a woman from the pile. He enabled widows to marry again without any penalty which his countenance could avert; and thus Leedes witnessed a conflict with an interpolated superstition exactly like that which has been conducted by Lord William Bentinck in our day. In the wooded districts, great hunts were going on, especially where military men were stationed; and the highest officers drove their own elephants, in order not to be helpless if their drivers dropped in battle. Spear-matches and races were the amusements in the country, as wrestling and active footgames were in the towns. The thief-caste, the hereditary hill-robbers, kept in exercise the valour and alacrity of the military class. The monastic orders, another innovation, were conspicuous in Akbar's time, and must have stirred Leedes's spirit with some of the ire of Protestant England. The Hindoo women held a low rank theoretically, but practically were like other matrons and maidens in those essential ideas and feelings which are common to all races in all times. The same may be said of the handsome children. The juvenile gentry looked and behaved like little men and women; and the children of the poor (who went to school, however, and learned writing and arithmetic), rolled

in the dust, and played in the streets like any Christians.

There is no occasion to draw the contrasting picture, as Akbar's Mohammedan subjects were very like the Arabs of our own day. Their occupations, dress, manners, and amusements were substantially the same. It is true, they were adopting some Hindoo customs, as the Hindoos were occasionally wearing turbans, and surrounding their houses with gardens, after the fashion of their conquerors. But Leedes could observe these mutual influences better than we can; and where he could have pointed out resemblances, we can only mark the distinctions which must have struck the eye of a stranger arriving at the court of the great Akbar, at the close of the sixteenth century.

CHAPTER III.

BEGINNING OF COMMERCE.

1593—1624.

“Sir, if any other come that hath better iron than you, he will be master of all this gold.”—*Solon to Cræsus*.

WE are accustomed to consider the 16th century a very lively age in regard to foreign adventure, geographical and mercantile; and yet we recognise, in the beginnings of the East India Company, a good deal of that inertness which individual adventurers in commerce, discovery, and politics have always complained of in the English people. Even after Stevens and Fitch had told the story of their respective voyages, and some notion was entertained of the splendours which Leedes witnessed at the court of Akbar, it was difficult to obtain subscriptions of capital, however small, for a trading experiment to the richest country in the world. The founders of the speculation went about diligently among their mercantile friends, representing to them the prodigious profits that the Portuguese, and of late the Dutch, were making

by buying spices and other eastern commodities on the coast of India, instead of from middlemen in nearer ports. There was evidence that we were paying nearly three times as much for our spices, indigo, and raw silk, by purchasing them at Aleppo or Alexandria, as we should if we sent ships to Malabar. There was a certainty of enormous profits, if the London merchants would but subscribe a sufficient sum to send out an expedition properly fitted out and guarded. At one time a favourable sensation was excited by the arrival of the cargo brought in as a prize by Sir John Burroughs, the commander of one of Raleigh's armaments. This cargo of a Portuguese trader to India, seized near the Azores, and brought into Dartmouth, was found to consist of pearls and gold, silks and ivory, porcelain, cottons, drugs and perfumes, and other captivating commodities: and a fillip was given for the moment to enterprise in the direction of India: but in 1599 only 30,000*l.* had been subscribed in 101 shares. In the first year of the new century, the "Adventurers" obtained a charter from the Crown, giving them, during a term of fifteen years, privileges which constituted their trade with India a close monopoly. As this charter was the foundation-stone of the mighty structure of our Indian empire, it is worth while to glance at its leading provisions. "The Governor and Company of Merchants of London

trading into the East Indies" were empowered to engross the entire traffic beyond the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan, unless they chose to license private traders to repair to the same markets. The twenty-four directors and the governor (Thomas Smythe, Esq.) were appointed, in the first instance, in the charter; but the 'Company might at once elect a deputy governor, and in future all their office-bearers, from the highest to the lowest. The charter gave power to make bye-laws; to inflict punishments, corporal and pecuniary, provided they were in accordance with the laws of England; to export goods duty-free for four years; and to export foreign coin or bullion to the amount of 30,000*l.* a year, provided 6,000*l.* of it had been coined at the Mint, and that the amount thus exported was returned within six months of the end of every voyage, except the first. The Charter might be cancelled at any time upon two years' notice being given. Such were the terms of that first permission to trade with India, out of which grew our acquisition of the greatest dependency on record in the history of nations.

The languor of the subscribers shows how entirely public expectation was limited to a small trade, to be carried on under very uncertain conditions. The contributors did not pay up; some had never believed they should see their money again; others

thought it highly unpatriotic to send money out of the country; others again dwelt on the dangers of the voyage; and scarcely any body beyond the Board of Directors seems to have considered the project a hopeful one, in any view. It was in vain that the clever Director, Mr. Thomas Mun, represented that the husbandman is not a madman because he flings away good wheat upon the ground; and, in the same way, an exporter of gold and silver sends it abroad in expectation of a pecuniary harvest. Notwithstanding such illustrations, so many subscribers failed to pay up their share of the expenses of the first expedition, that the willing members were compelled to form an association within the Company, taking all cost and responsibility on themselves, and possessing themselves of all the returns.

It is not to our present purpose to follow the commercial fortunes of the Company in its early days. The object of dwelling even thus long on the details of its formation is to indicate that its aims were purely commercial, and understood to be so, by both the Government and people of England. As to the dimensions of the speculation, it will be enough to say that the first expedition consisted of five small ships; that the total cost of ships and cargoes was under 70,000*l.*; that the cargoes consisted of the precious metals, iron, and tin, broadcloths, cutlery, and glass; and that the result was fortunate on the whole. For a long term of years great losses nearly balanced

great profits; and the prodigious consumption of time, in days when a voyage to the Malabar coast occupied from six to twelve or fifteen months each way, practically reduced to moderation the profits which, computed in the Indian market, were boasted of as amounting to 130 or even 170 per cent. The first expedition sailed in February, 1601, and returned in September, 1603. There appears to be no evidence that it touched the coasts of the Indian peninsula at all, and its chief trade was certainly with some islands of the Eastern Archipelago.

It was five years after its return that the arrival of the English seems to have first attracted attention in India. Akbar was dead when the British ship *Hector* arrived at Surat, under the command of Captain William Hawkins, who brought two letters to the Mogul Emperor, one from James I., and one from the East India Company. The reigning Emperor, the son of Akbar, criminal in all his relations in his youth, was by this time beginning to retrieve his character, chiefly through a long attachment to the immortal Nurjehan—the Nourmahal of “Lalla Rookh,” and the princess to whose memory the finest mausoleum extant, the Taj-Mahal, at Agra, was erected by her husband. It was during her term of political activity that the English were encouraged to make a lodgment, for commercial purposes, in India; and it might be for want of her discernment that Commander Hawkins and his com-

rades met with little favour in 1608, three years before her marriage with Jehanghir, and while she was the wife of another. It was nearly three years before the *Hector* got away; and then without replies to King James and the Company, and through the good offices of Sir Henry Middleton.

Sir Henry Middleton arrived at Surat in 1609, in command of a fleet which failed in its commercial objects through the opposition of the Turks on the Arabian, and the Portuguese on the Malabar coasts; but its appearance opened a way for better success two years later, when two ships, under the command of Captain Best, made such a gallant resistance when attacked by a Portuguese squadron, not far from Surat, as to impress the inhabitants very favourably. Captain Best had before been sounding the Governor of Ahmedabad, in Guzerat, about a treaty of commerce; and the negotiation was presently concluded, when the curiosity and interest of the inhabitants were fairly excited. In the same year that the Mogul Emperor married the glorious Nurjehan—the political heroine of Hindostan Proper, as Chand Bibi was the martial heroine of the Deccan—he permitted the English to establish four factories within his dominions. These factories were all on or near the Gulf of Cambay, being at Surat, Cambay, Ahmedabad, and Goga. In return for leave to make this lodgment, the English paid an export duty of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on all their shipments.

In one sense, this acquisition of a footing in India was highly important to England. The Company were no longer a temporary association, drawing near the end of a fifteen years' term, and trading on capital subscribed by a few eager speculators in the name of a much larger number. King James was easy to deal with, in comparison with the prudent Queen who had granted the first charter; and he made no difficulty about abolishing such limitations as did not suit the Company's convenience. Under the renewal, which dated from 1609, there was no term fixed for the expiration of the charter. The Directors had an eternity before them, provided they escaped such impeachment as would bring a three years' notice of dissolution upon them. They now dispensed with the private subscriptions which had at once caused them trouble and rendered the separate voyages more profitable than the subsequent joint-stock enterprises. The amount of the joint-stock capital on which the new scheme proceeded was 420,000*l.* Five years later, a further capital of above a million and a half was raised, and then separately managed; and in 1632, a third, of nearly half a million—incidents which show what were the commercial results of the first establishment of our factories in 1613. The Emperor's permission was obtained, as I have said, in 1611: but the requisite firman was not signed till the 11th of January, 1613.

If the English speculators thought of nothing but

commerce in settling their Indian plans at home, much more certainly must they have contemplated nothing else when in Hindostan. What they saw there dwarfed everything English in a manner now scarcely to be imagined by us. By degrees the immensity of the territory opened upon them, as they heard of groups of sovereigns, and crowds of chieftains, each with a province or a district, or a kingdom or an empire under his control, and as they found the old Hindoo organization of rulers of ten towns, and a hundred towns, and a thousand towns, commemorated in traditions. The mere deserted capitals were like the metropolitan cities of Europe fallen asleep. By degrees they learned something of the two deltas, of the Ganges and the Indus, where the mere mouths of rivers might constitute fair kingdoms, without including the course of their mighty streams. By degrees their imaginations became able to attain the peaks of the Himalaya, and to comprehend the spaces of the Deccan which were guarded by the Ghauts. The more they learned of Indian magnitudes, the less could they have conceived of having any other than commercial business there. The phenomena of human life and manners were as stupendous in their proportions as the productions of nature. Our first residents at the native courts saw wars made on such a scale that they hardly dared to tell it at home, for fear of the contempt with which their "travellers'

tales" would be treated. In the battles between the powers of Hindostan Proper and the Deccan, 200,000 men were left dead after a single battle. A rebellious heir-apparent, the day after his defeat, was compelled to ride in front of seven hundred of his impaled supporters. As 'the elephant' was to our cavalry horse, so were all the elements of the military system, so that an army was a marching nation, and its commissariat was the produce of an ordinary kingdom. In one expedition to the Deccan, the Mogul Emperor took 200,000 cavalry alone. The imperial wealth being in similar proportion to European ideas, the stimulus to commerce was strengthened, while every other ambition must have been overwhelmed. The Emperor sat on a throne, the jewellery of which would buy up all the crowns and coronets of kings and nobles all over the world. The shrines and mausoleums beggared the Western and Eastern Churches of Christendom, with all the Prophet's mosques to boot, from Egypt to Cabul. When other nations represent us, at this day, as having crept in upon that new region, in a humble aspect, and with low pretensions, we may well ask what else we could do. We were few and humble, and limited in our objects, and not a little amazed and dazzled at the spectacle of society organised on a scale wholly new to the European imagination. Happily, we are in possession of evidence that the case was so. King James sent an ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe, to the

Mogul Court in 1615, and, as he was received into high favour, and accompanied the Emperor on his military expeditions, as well as his journeys of pleasure, we have the means of knowing the proportion which substantial power bore to mere display. The real refinement and cultivation of the society into which he found himself thrown, were proved by the respect and courtesy shown to the bearer of gifts which must have appeared below notice to the princes and nobles of the Delhi court. Sir Thomas Roe reported many childish weaknesses in royal personages, intermixed with proofs of ability and wisdom; and he perceived that the military genius of the people must have declined considerably since Akbar's time; but he excited the admiration of the English King and people by his account of the state of the arts in Hindostan. In regard to architecture, the Taj-Mahal is, an immortal evidence of what the Mogul rule could produce; and, as to painting, the ambassador sent word that none but really good pictures would succeed; "Historical paintings, night-pieces, and landscapes," were his order; "but good; for they understand them as well as we." The language of the court was Persian; but Hawkins had found the Emperor ready to converse in Turkish; and everybody spoke Hindostanee. At one time, the Europeans at court saw Delhi so rebuilt that it might almost be said that Shah Jehán found it mud and left it marble; and on the other, they saw whole provinces

annexed to the west, and the Deccan, with its vast plains, its groups of kings, and hundreds of strong castles, subjugated by mere force of numbers. The armies of the Mogul sovereigns poured over the Vindhya mountains, in a dark cloud of invasion, like locust swarms on a north wind; and the one invasion left everything as bare as the other. Rebelions sprang up again, inviting new invasions, so that the final conquest of the Deccan was left for Aurungzebe to effect; but the intermediate manifestations of power and resource by the Mogul empire were profoundly impressive to European observers. It was not a little dazzling to see the sunshine strike the peacock-throne, (the fantail imitated in gems,) which was valued at six millions and a half by professional European jewellers; it was a fine spectacle to see the growth of the New Delhi, with its wide streets, their canal and avenues, and its esplanade, crowned with its fortified palace, glittering with burnished gold and snow-white marble; it must have been a sweet and solemn pleasure to see the Taj-Mahal at Agra grow up into its funereal completeness, adorned with all the tranquil and gracious imagery of death and regretful remembrance; but the phenomena which most deeply and effectually impressed the English mind were those of a social rule which could produce such monuments of art and wealth, and conduct wars for the annexation of kingdoms, without increasing the burdens

of the people, or perceptibly diminishing the treasure with which the imperial coffers seemed to be always filled. How was it possible that our first lodgment in such an empire should appear otherwise than small and unpretending? The imputation is, no doubt, that there was craft under the humility; but there is very clear evidence that the charge is simply slanderous. The English wanted to buy and sell; and they wanted nothing else whatever. Some excellent letters of advice of Sir Thomas Roe's to the Company remain to satisfy us on this point. He recommends even the abolition of his own office, and the employment of one native agent at 100*l.* a year, to watch over their rights at Delhi; and another at the port at 50*l.* a year, to watch the trade, and communicate with his principal. One port was better than more, he thought; and perhaps one factory better than any number. "It is not a number of posts, residences, and factories, that will profit you. They will increase charge, but not recompense it." But most emphatic was the exhortation to have nothing to do with military defences. "War and traffic are incompatible," declares Sir Thomas Roe. "At my first arrival, I understood a fort was very necessary; but experience teaches me we are refused it to our own advantage. If the Emperor would offer me ten, I would not accept of one."

At sea there must be warfare; and the general success of the British in their sea-fights with Euro-

pean rivals advanced their reputation on land; but those conflicts were only heard of; and, for a course of years, the native impression of an Englishman was of an energetic personage, always buying and selling, loading and unloading ships, emptying and filling warehouses, paying his way and demanding his dues, becoming irritable when the Dutch and Portuguese and the Spice Islands were mentioned, and always victorious at sea over the Dutch and Portuguese, and in the question of spice.

Such was the beginning of our connection with India. It was, as we see, purely commercial. A change took place in 1624, which excited no particular notice or marked expectation at the time, but which is now regarded as introducing a new period in our relations with India.

CHAPTER IV.

BEGINNING OF LOCAL ESTABLISHMENT

1624—1698.

“Give me a seat, and I will make myself room to lie down.”
Spanish Proverb.

The first century of British residence in India affords as good an illustration as could easily be found of the wise conclusion—“Man proposes; God disposes.” Nothing could well be more unlike what men designed and anticipated than the issues of the early schemes of the East India Company. The members themselves, their supporters and their opponents, were alike surprised at finding, from period to period, that they accomplished scarcely anything they designed, and that all manner of unlooked-for things came to pass—as if the whole affair was some mighty sport, in which grave and earnest men were made the agents of some transcendent levity, or were bewildered pupils in some new school which they had entered unawares. The merchants, who began the whole business, meant to trade, and obtain large profits, and, above all else, to avoid everything but trade. With the

magnificent shows of life in India they had no concern whatever, beyond valuing, buying and selling the commodities in use before their eyes. They knew nothing, and cared nothing, about politics—Mogul or Mahratta; and, as for war, it was only too fearful even to witness it. All they desired was to be let alone to make their fortunes, without any thought of law, government, negotiation, or war, except as far as any of these might affect their commerce—a handful of strangers as they were, on a foreign coast. No men could be more sincere than these men were; and yet, in the course of the next century, a mocking destiny seemed to make teetotums of them, their plans, and their fortunes.

Their commerce was never very successful. With every desire to make the best of it, they could never present a statement of their condition which was not highly stimulating and amusing to private speculators, who followed them into the field, and beat them at all points. They could not satisfy their own supporters, or restrain their enemies from competition. By some evil chance, they were always infested with rivals, supplanted by the Dutch, and tricked by the Portuguese. They were the occasion of alarming collisions between the two Houses of Parliament; and if they won what they desired from one sovereign, the next came down upon them for money, while their balance-sheet satisfied their

enemies better than their friends. They exchanged commodities, no doubt, and made profits; but their concerns were puny in comparison with their pretensions, and did not expand at all in proportion to their scope. It will be enough to say that their reports for the three years preceding 1683 show that they sent out in those years respectively ten ships, eleven, and seventeen; and that the total cargoes were worth 461,700*l.*, 596,000*l.*, and 740,000*l.* While their direct object succeeded no better than this, they found themselves passing laws, ruling settlements, and making war and negotiating treaties, in alliance or opposition, with the princes of the country. They found themselves touching many points of Indian territory and Indian polity, and fastening wherever they touched, till the necessity was ripe which made them a great administrative and military power. It would take a volume to exhibit their history during the seventeenth century. But it may be possible to fill up by a rapid sketch the interval between the opening of the first warehouse at Surat and their establishment as a substantive power in India, when the last great Mogul Emperor had gone down to his grave. On the rivalships of competing companies in England, and the difficulties with individual adventurers in the East, I cannot even touch. In the history of the East India Company, no part is perhaps more interesting; but my object is to follow the progress

of the British occupation of India; and I must—whenever it is possible—confine myself to the Asiatic scene of action, during the century which decided our fortunes there.

Sir Thomas Roe, we have seen, strongly condemned the setting up of forts to protect the warehouses. There must be some fighting at sea with European rivals, but none in India, where the inhabitants gave us no difficulty. But there was a third party to be guarded against—the Company's own servants. Besides the sprinkling of thieves and scamps, always attracted to remote scenes of speculation, there was an ambitious, or headstrong, or tyrannical man turning up now and then to make mischief, offending neighbours, or defying his masters. The masters applied to the King in 1624 for authority to punish their servants in India by civil and martial law; and the authority was given, without hesitation, even to the ultimate point, of inflicting capital punishment. The King did not consult Parliament, nor express any doubt of the necessity of the case; and there is no evidence that the petitioners had any notion of what was comprehended in their request. No preparation had been made for establishing law and justice in the new settlements; and now the commercial adventurers found themselves able to punish at discretion, without any principles or rules of law to go by. Their function as legislators and executive rulers was thus

already indicated for them; and on this account the year 1624 is regarded as constituting an era in their history. The wisest men among them, during the reigns of the Stuarts, seem to have entertained a truly royal contempt for constitutional law, and a great relish for freedom of will and hand in executive matters. In the early history of the Company, there are no greater names than those of the brothers Sir Josiah and Sir John Child. These gentlemen were full of sense, information, vigour, and commercial prudence; yet Sir Josiah has left us an account of his notions which reads strangely in our day. A Mr. Vaux, who in 1686 entered upon the office of manager, with professions of a desire to act justly and uprightly, and with a constant regard to the laws of his country, was thus rebuked by his patron. Sir Josiah Child "told Mr. Vaux roundly that he expected *his* orders were to be his rules, and not the laws of England, which were a heap of nonsense, compiled by a few ignorant country gentlemen, who hardly knew how to make laws for the good government of their own private families, much less for the regulating of companies and foreign commerce." Such was the view of an old man who had seen the whole procession of the statesmen of the Commonwealth pass before his eyes.

Meantime, the wars of the princes of India had much of the same effect on society as the w:

the Roses in England. The commercial classes grew and throve while the nobles fought over their heads, so that when, in the English case, a mere group was left to assemble in the Peers' House, a town was found to have grown up at the mouth of every river, and shipping to have found its way into many a new harbour. Thus it was in India during the final process of the subjugation of the Deccan by the Mogul sovereigns. Not only the indefatigable Dutch, and the Portuguese, who were first in the field, but the English, and presently the French, began to alight and make themselves at home on distant coasts of the peninsula. Piece goods, then in great demand—the delicate muslins and soft cottons of the Deccan—were to be had more easily on the Coromandel coast than on the western, and the Company attempted to set up several factories or depôts there. We read of four, besides the Madras establishment; but European rivals were hardy, and native governments were harsh, and one after another was given up, or transferred to some safer place—to be again removed. Under these difficulties, men began to talk again of forts. It might be true that garrisons would absorb all the profits of trade; but it was clear that trade could not go on without garrisons. No help was to be had from home. During the civil war there, nobody had any attention to spare for India; and the Company's agents must take care of themselves: so, in 1640, they obtained leave from the

native government to build the fort at Madras—Fort St. George; and the new institution was fairly established which annulled the purely pacific character of British settlements in India. The forts were a humble enough affair; and the native soldiers who were hired to hold them were armed with anything which came to hand, from bows and arrows to damaged muskets; but the Company had now a military front to show, and was pretty sure to be soon called on for evidences of its military quality.

It was the King himself, Charles I., who had brought the Company round to the conviction that they must have forts. In 1635 he had granted a license to a rival company, alleging, among other reasons for the act, that the existing company had fallen short of their duty in neglecting to establish fortified factories, or seats of trade, to which the King's subjects could resort with safety. The charter was supposed to be forfeited by the King's death, as it was a royal and not a parliamentary boon: but the Company exerted themselves to found a claim to better support whenever the kingdom should be once more brought under a settled government. They turned, therefore, to the rich basin of the Ganges, to see if they could not effect a lodgment there, where produce of the most varied kind abounded. We hear of them as having some sort of settlement at Hooghly in 1640; but it brought them more

stores to their settlements duty-free; to arrest and send home any traders they found encroaching on their commerce; and to exercise civil and criminal jurisdiction in India, according to the laws of England.

These provisions for defence were necessitated by the wars of Indian potentates, in the midst of which unguarded factories could have had no security whatever: but it is a remarkable fact that the "Adventurers" who were so determined at first, and for as long as possible, to have none but commercial relations with India should find themselves at the end of sixty years in possession of forts and a soldiery, of courts of justice, and a power of life and death; and likely to enter into political alliances, as a substantive power. So early as 1653, Fort St. George was erected into a Presidency, because it was unsafe for the English residents to be dependent on a seat of government so remote as Bantam while the native potentates on the Coromandel coast were perpetually at war, and the European settlers pretty much at their mercy. When secure of their new powers, the Company made Surat and Fort St. George their centres of government, subordinating a few other settlements to them, and breaking up some, in outlying places, which were too insecure or expensive to be worth retaining.

The use which they made of their power to send home interlopers presently caused a collision between

the two Houses of Parliament, which, however serious, should find its place in a constitutional history of England, rather than in a sketch of our relations with India. "The Skinner case" perplexed all England, and caused the King to adjourn Parliament seven times before he could restore any appearance of peace; but the mischief lay rather in the King and the Lords acting without the constitutional participation of the Commons than in any discovery that the powers of the Company in India were too extensive. One natural consequence, however, was that the Company were more fully recognised at home as a power than they had ever been before.

Their first military reputation grew out of an accident, happening (as was henceforth to be the rule) through the hostility of native potentates. Aurungzebe, the last great Mogul ruler, was governing in the place of his deposed father in 1664, when the first great Mahratta Chief, Sivajee, marched against him, choosing Surat for his point of attack. The Governor of Surat shut himself up in the castle, the inhabitants fled; but the English stood their ground. They refused to capitulate, defended their factory, with the aid of some ships' crews, and cleared the neighbourhood of the enemy, affording substantial protection to the residents. The residents thanked and blessed them, and Aurungzebe remitted on their behalf a part of the Customs' duties at Surat, and all transit charges whatever. At that time,

when Aurungzebe was at the height of his renown, and finally subjugating the Deccan, martial qualities were highly valued; and there is no doubt of the effect on the people of India of the gallant conduct of the British at Surat. They could make no such parade as the Mogul Emperor, with his 200,000 horse, his countless host of infantry, his long lines of elephants, and his glitter of arms, from the one horizon to the other; but the simple readiness and dauntless bearing of the little company of English, within their small enclosure, made an ineffaceable impression on a people who may be able to admire contrasts as much as other races of men. It might have been well if, during recent years, a little more attention had been paid to this first military success in India by those who insist that the natives of India can be impressed only by outward show, imitated from barbaric times and rulers. From point to point of our Indian history there are evidences that the inhabitants of our Asiatic territories are just as human in their admiration of great personal qualities, apart from external grandeur, as the men of Europe and America.

The reign of Charles II. was remarkable in the history of British India for several reasons. The extension of powers by the Charter of 1661 was one. The introduction of tea is another. Early in 1668, the Company's agent at Bantam was desired to send home 100lbs. of tea, "the best he could get:" and

thus began the Company's trade in a commodity to which it owes its existence at this day. It would be an interesting speculation—what our relations with India would now be if tea had not been introduced into Europe, and so relished as to afford an adequate support to the East India Company till its commercial phase was past.

Lastly, it was through Charles II. that the Company acquired Bombay. The island of Bombay was a part of the marriage portion of Catherine of Portugal, the Queen of Charles II. It was more expensive than profitable to the Crown, and it suited the convenience of all parties that it should be transferred to the Company. The conditions of the transfer were remarkable. After a provision that Bombay should not pass out of British possession, it was permitted to the Company to legislate for the settlement, and to wage war on behalf of it. Their laws were to be “consonant to reason,” and “as near as might be” to English methods: but legislative and military powers were fully and freely conferred. One of the first consequences was that the western Presidency was removed from Surat to Bombay. It was in 1668 that the Company acquired Bombay; and from that time till 1698 there were two Presidencies, with the Bengal settlement in a state of dependency on them. Till 1692 the Bengal establishment was at Hooghly, thirty miles above Calcutta. In that year it was removed to Calcutta,

and in six years more Calcutta itself with two adjoining villages, was granted to the Company by a grandson of Aurungzebe, who permitted the erection of fortifications and full judiciary powers over the inhabitants. The new fortifications were naturally named after the reigning king, William III., and the agency at Fort William was soon converted into a third Presidency.

Thus were the British in India transformed, in the course of one century, from a handful of "adventurers," landing a cargo of goods, in a tentative way, at the mouth of the Taptee, and glad to sell their commodities and buy others on the residents' own terms, to a body of colonists, much considered for their extensive transactions, and the powers, legislative, executive, and military, which they wielded. Whence these powers were derived, who these English were, and why they came, might be more than Aurungzebe himself could distinctly explain; and to this day, the relation of our Indian empire to the British seems to be a puzzle to the inhabitants, being really anomalous in English eyes as well. But there we were, acting from three centres of authority and power, and exercising whatever influence commerce put into our hands. It was not for want of enterprise that the British had as yet no territorial power. Sir Josiah Child believed the possession of more or less territory to be necessary to the security of our commerce; and in 1686 an attempt was made

to obtain a footing in Bengal by force of arms. It not only failed, but would have resulted in the expulsion of every Englishman from the Mogul's dominions, but for the importance of our commerce to Aurungzebe's treasury. Our reputation suffered by this unsuccessful prank of ambition and cupidity; but not the less did the last of the great Moguls go to his grave, knowing that he left the English established in his dominions beyond the possibility of dislodgment. They were neither subjects nor rulers in India; but such a man as Aurungzebe must have been well aware that if they were really irremovable they must sooner or later become the one or the other.

CHAPTER V.

LIFE IN THE INFANT PRESIDENCIES.

1698—1740.

“In everything we do, we may be possibly laying a train of consequences, the operation of which may terminate only with our existence.”—BAILEY.

Up to the time of Aurungzebe's death, our relations with India were very simple, and might be easily and rapidly described. The Mogul Court was the one object which we had to observe, and in regard to which we had to act. To be on good terms with the Mogul Emperors was to be prosperous and safe: to incur their displeasure was to be in danger and difficulty. The Company had troubles outside the pale of their Indian relations; opponents at home, foreign rivals on the seas, and interlopers on their own commercial grounds; but, as far as the powers of India were concerned, the Mogul sovereigns were supreme, and our affairs were simple accordingly. We had to maintain and improve our commercial privileges, to secure a permanent footing in the country; and, for the rest, to buy and sell to the best advantage.

But a time of change must come, sooner or later; and the nature of the change which must ensue on the death of such a sovereign as Aurungzebe, after a reign of forty-nine years, might be foretold, without any pretensions to second sight. When a ruler, wise, efficient, strong in will, and imposing in his successes, dies after a long reign, leaving several sons, a weak government, civil strife, and foreign war as a consequence, may be only too confidently anticipated. In the case of Aurungzebe and his sons, the chances of the future were even worse than usual. The last of the great Moguls commanded everything but affection. He irritated his dependants and subjects while compelling them to admire his abilities and his wisdom. He alienated the Hindoos (the great mass of his subjects) by constant checks and discouragements, while protecting them from Musulman persecution. He was regarded by the Faithful as a greater monarch than even Akbar; yet they gave him no such effectual support as enabled him to accomplish his schemes. He conquered the Deccan; yet, in his old age, he had more and more to dread from the Mahrattas; and, as he himself disclosed, he was borne down by anxiety as to what he might have to endure in life, and dread of what he might have to encounter after death. It must have been plain to all eyes that bad times were coming; and the

British would have foreseen, if their wisdom had corresponded to their needs, that complications and embarrassments must arise, largely affecting, if not entirely changing, their relations with the Mogul empire. In one instance by accident, and in another by a movement of foolish ambition, the British were on bad terms with Aurungzebe, some years before his death. In 1698, a pilgrim ship on its way to Mecca was taken by pirates, who were, or were said to be, English. The Emperor ordered the arrest of the merchants at our factories, and the seizure of Bombay; but his own agents were favourable to their British neighbours, and admitted their plea of innocence; and if anything was done, it was only in the way of inflicting a fine. We have already referred to the other case—that of the hostile movement in Bengal, in 1686, when the Company, strengthened by a few troops from home, hoped to obtain redress for losses and a territorial footing by seizing and fortifying Chittagong. The scheme failed, through misadventure and mismanagement; and the incident was one which naturally deepened the Emperor's distrust, and confirmed the jealous antipathy of the Nabob of Bengal to the English. The aged Emperor's life was prolonged beyond the period of rivalry in England and strife in Parliament which seemed likely to extinguish the Company's privileges altogether, and under which

the trade of India was practically free from 1693 to 1698: and Aurungzebe was still living when the associations which had battled for the commerce of his empire at length joined their forces as "The United Company of Merchants of England, trading to the East Indies." While their old patron was failing in strength and spirits as he verged towards his 90th year, the British merchants obtained the grant of Calcutta, as before mentioned, built Fort William, raised Bengal from its subjection to Bombay up to the rank of a Presidency, and obtained from Parliament, in the form of an absolute prohibition of Indian manufactured goods for home consumption, a reversal of the free trade which had existed for several years, to the advantage of the public, and the discontent of the Company.

Then, after five years more, spent in establishing factories wherever they could be imposed, and in finding that many of them were more expensive than they were worth, the catastrophe arrived. Aurungzebe died in 1707; and with him the empire of the Moguls may be said to have passed away. Crimes of violence and treachery had been frequent before; now they occurred at the Court of Delhi and its dependencies in an unintermitting series, and external foes used their opportunities; so that when Aurungzebe had been dead thirty years, the empire was just in the state of helplessness and corruption which had tempted Timur and Baber to invade it. The

same thing happened again. The greatest of Persian warriors, Nadir Shah, crossed the Indus towards the close of 1738, and was giving out his decrees from the palace at Delhi in March 1739.

Our concern with Indian history, in this place, is only in as far as it is connected with the conduct and the fortunes of the British on the spot. It is no easy matter to give even that much without tedious and irksome detail; yet the interval between the death of Aurungzebe and the administration of Clive must not be passed over, if the subsequent history is to be understood, and in any degree relished. Perhaps the best way of conveying something like a clear impression of our Indian relations, from a century and a half to a century ago, is to offer a sketch of what life in India was like, after the founding of the three Presidencies. In the course of such a survey we may discover which of the crowd of native States involved British fortunes more or less with their own; and the rest of the multitude of potentates, with all their marches, battles, "treasons, stratagems, and spoils," may be left undistinguished—on the understanding, however, that they must not be altogether forgotten, as if they did not exist, because it was a leading feature of the life of the British in India that they were always surrounded by rulers and peoples who were at feud, and who desisted from mutual slaughter only to enter upon conflicts of deceit and treachery. The alternative was between savage

warfare in the field and diabolical bad faith in diplomacy; and the constant presence of such phases of social life must produce more or less effect on the condition, moral and material, of all spectators.

First, we must glance at the British residents themselves, in their chief settlements. Of these the most important was Fort St. George, standing only a few yards from the sea, on a sounding shore, where the surf is too furious to be crossed except by boats of a peculiar construction. A worse place for foreign commerce could hardly have been fixed on: five miles of coast, with a strong current running along the shore, and a roadstead so exposed that, as often as not, the native rafts are the only means of communication with the shipping outside. It must have been a welcome amusement to the gentlemen, doomed to so monotonous a life, to see the agile natives put forth and return with their catamarans, casting their lives into the surf as into a lottery, to find a blank or a rich recompense for the daring. A large town of mean dwellings had sprung up near the fort; and outside the town some pleasant-looking country houses stood, each in its own garden. There lived the writers and the factors, and the merchants, seniors and juniors. Their work was to deal with the native weavers and indigo growers; to make advances to the poorest, and pay the balances, and see the cargoes packed, and conduct the correspondence home, and preserve the Company's monopoly, and pay some

little attention to the soldiers in the fort, and order in the factory. The Writers were the clerks and book-keepers; and their pay was so small that the wonder is why they went so far, and to live in such a climate, for so little. The Factors ordered, received, and despatched the commodities. The Merchants conducted the commerce—the seniors having been writers for five years, factors for three, and junior merchants for three, and being now qualified to be Members of Council, with the chance of being President. What their pleasures were we learn from tradition and their correspondence. They rode in the cool hours; they played cards, and they looked out over the sea, like other clerks and merchants in countries remote from home. There was little to be told about any pursuits of a literary or other thoughtful character.

The life at Bombay was much the same, but with more variety, and perhaps more local vexations. The harbour was good: but nothing else in that small island was good. Whatever was not parched rock was swamp or pool. The tides are high; and there was then nothing to save the lower parts of the island from invasion by the sea. At times, the inhabitants of separate houses were isolated for days or weeks together. The place was unhealthy, of course. The island of Salsette, now united with Bombay by causeways, was then in the possession of the Mahrattas, who were anything but quiet and decent neighbours; and yet it was important to be

on terms with them, as the salt soil of Bombay island would grow literally nothing but cocoa-nut trees; and there were emergencies when it was a matter of necessity to get food from Salsette. On the other hand, life was less stagnant at Bombay than in any other part of India. There was more material for mere amusement in the hunts on the Malabar shore, and in the remains of antiquity, like the rock temples on the island of Elephanta: but there were more stirring influences still in the liabilities of the position—in the piratical attacks from without and the mutinies within. It was necessary to keep constant watch and guard against the pirates of the Arabian Sea; and this was the more difficult from the frequency of mutiny within the gates. Six years after the cession of Bombay to the Company a revolt exercised the new powers of the merchants in decreeing and inflicting capital punishment; and a far more formidable one, eight years after, in behalf of the King as proprietor of Bombay, so endangered the Company's tenure that the King had to interfere in their favour, and the western presidency was transferred to Bombay from Surat. Yet we meet with occasional notices of the manners of the time and place which show that the residents were not engrossed by their cares. A Mogul diplomatist and historian, who was sent to Bombay on a mission by Aurungzebe in a time of misunderstanding, reported of the merchants as knowing how to receive envoys properly, and making the

most of the military material they had to display. The elderly gentlemen were richly dressed, and sufficiently acute and wise, though they laughed rather more than such personages should on such an occasion.

When the English in Bengal preferred settling lower down on the Ganges than Hooghly, their reason was that the site of Calcutta was more convenient for shipping, and therefore more secure. The aspect of their plot of land was discouraging enough. It was chiefly jungle and marsh, with three villages of thatched huts. There was scarcely a dwelling outside these poor villages. The Dutch and the French passed up and down between their shipping and their factories, which were higher up the river than Hooghly. Sometimes they were enemies, and sometimes only rivals; and they were the only companionable persons our factors ever saw, except on the arrival of their own vessels. The natives were vexatious people to deal with—indolent, slow, spiritless, but producing goods which were indispensable to commerce. The merchants were incessantly engaged in driving them to fulfil their engagements, and in vigilance against the lies and trickery which abounded among a timid race, always suffering under the oppression of native rulers. Occasional hunts, river trips, and hospitality to visitors, were the only recreation of the Calcutta merchants when once their houses were built along the river banks. The station

was unhealthy; and their dwellings were too like English houses for the climate, and much less favourable to health and comfort than they might have been. It must be hoped that the managers and merchants here laughed as much as those at Bombay; but it must have been difficult at times to find the occasion.

Here is the little we can gather about the English agents, as they lived at the three presidencies. Something more is known of the orders of persons about them, who made up the business, the interest, and the anxiety of their lives, apart from their immediate commercial occupations.

The chief plague of life at all the settlements was that hydra-headed body—the “interlopers,” or private traders. The hatred of interlopers seems to have been to the British factor in India something like the Indian-hating of the pioneer in the wilds of America. To track intruders who were trafficking under foreign passports was as good an excitement as tiger-hunting: and there was no lack of employment while that sort of enemy infested the country. Evidence was collected; complaints were sent home; captures were made, and offenders shipped off as prisoners. A series of Acts of Parliament was obtained to check this encroachment, culminating in one which declared all British subjects found in India outside of the Company’s service guilty of a high misdemeanour, and liable to seizure

accordingly, for trial at home; but neither laws, perils, forfeiture, nor personal penalties availed to preserve the Company's monopoly as long as foreign potentates favoured Indian enterprises, and offered passports to capitalists of all nations to prosecute them. No game laws have ever secured the preserves of the landed gentry; and a whole series of Acts failed to deter the interlopers. The factors had to hunt them the more the longer the conflict for the monopoly went on. The great ladies of Europe wore more and more Indian silks; and yet the commerce of the Company did not increase. The proprietors at home were dissatisfied with the returns: the managers on the spot declared their ill-success to be owing to the amount of illegal traffic; and though this was only partially true, their anxieties caused the interlopers to be the plague of their lives.

The sepoys began to occupy some time and attention. As soon as there were forts, there must be soldiers. A few recruits came out from home—a very bad set, for the most part. Deserters from the other European settlements in India offered themselves: but they were worse still—inasmuch as, in their case, the probability of treachery was added to the vices which had sent them adrift. At Bombay, but not on the eastern side, there were half-castes or converts, Indo-Portuguese by blood or by proselytism. In all the stations there was a better resource,

though thus far a very scanty one, in the sepoy, or native soldiers. When first engaged, the sepoy were partly armed with bows and arrows, and partly with the sword and buckler of the country. They wore the usual turban, vest, and drawers, and were commanded by native officers. They were soon trained to the use of the musket; but no one thought of applying European discipline till they had proved their steadiness, and capacity of rendering good service in the forts. That no account was kept of their numbers at the respective settlements shows how little idea there was of the importance of this native soldiery to our future conquest and maintenance of our Indian empire. It appears that the French were beforehand with us in training the sepoy they found, as well as the negroes they imported. The sufferings of our factors from the French arms in 1746 proved how great the neglect of the British had been; and from 1748 onwards, the British sepoy were expressly reported of, as to their numbers and quality. Meantime, as the head of each presidency was Commander-in-chief of the troops of his settlement, he was more or less occupied with his few sepoy, on whom the safety of the forts mainly depended. They were supremely valuable as acclimatized soldiers; but, till long experience had proved their fidelity, they could not but be a great anxiety, as often as hostile movements of neighbours made them most indispensable.

Those hostile neighbours were of various races and qualities; but the two chief are all that can be noticed here.

The French had established a settlement at Pondicherry in the latter part of the seventeenth century; and the same sort of jealousy which our factors entertained of the Dutch and Portuguese was aggravated in the case of the French by the hereditary national hatred, which the state of Europe particularly strengthened at that time. The two nations gnashed their teeth and shook their fists at each other from Madras and Pondicherry (less than 90 miles apart) as they did from Dover and Calais. We shall see presently how their state of mutual vigilance issued in the middle of the last century.

The other formidable neighbour was the Mah-rattas. Considering the space they occupy in the history of British India, it seems strange that they should have been as yet scarcely alluded to. The reason is that they rose into notice only in the time of Aurungzebe. Five centuries before, their name had occurred in Eastern chronicles as that of a conquered hill-people, supposed to live along the course of the Nerbudda, and up towards Guzerat—Candeish being a part of their territory. Sivajee founded the great modern Mahratta empire, but, dying a quarter of a century before Aurungzebe, his successors were kept down by the great Mogul. Nothing could check them, however, as a nation

of predatory warriors: and they so managed their warfare as to win over a multitude of landowners by fear or favour. The nominal sovereigns of the Mahrattas were prisoners from generation to generation; but their hereditary prime ministers (the Peishwas) answered the purpose of viceroys. The method of rule was to confer large grants of land on chiefs, who were virtual sovereigns, while superstitiously acknowledging in words the supremacy of their rajah. At the beginning of the last century, the Mahrattas seem to have been here, there, and everywhere. Sivajee's father had a tract of land in the Carnatic, and the command of 10,000 cavalry; so that the managers at Fort George might well live in dread of the Mahrattas. Mahratta chiefs were at Poonah and in Salsette, in Berar and in Guzerat; so that Bombay had to keep a yet more vigilant watch. They professed to approach the north-east no nearer than Berar: but not the less were they feared in Bengal. The Nabob of Bengal paid blackmail to them, or the rice crops of whole provinces were swept off: and the British fortified Calcutta, for the protection of their magazines of goods, and of food and ammunition.

Such was life in our Indian Presidencies for forty years after the death of Aurungzebe.

CHAPTER VI.

BEGINNING OF A MILITARY FUNCTION.

1740—1752.

“So then, when the pedlar found he was welcome in the castle, he made himself at home. He set down his box, and put off his cloak : and behold ! he was in armour, and wore a sword. Then one said he had seen the glitter of the breastplate while yet the stranger was on the threshold ; and another had heard the tap of the sword against the floor : and the family mistrusted the change : but the stranger said that his armour and weapons were as necessary to his calling as his box and its lock and key.”—*Fairy Tale*.

“He lived unknown

To fame or fortune ; haply eyed at distance
Some edileship, ambitious of the power
To judge of weights and measures ; scarcely dared
On expectations strongest wing to soar
High as the consulate, that empty shade
Of long-forgotten liberty : when I
Oped his young eye to bear the blaze of greatness ;
Showed him where empire towered, and bade him strike
The noble quarry.”—GRAY.

THE period last described was that of transition from the first phase of British life in India to another which had not been dreamed of by the earliest adventurers. The commercial character of our Eastern enterprise was now to merge in the military and territorial.

The first recognition of us as holders of territory

was from the date of the patents granted to us by a descendant of Aurungzebe's, in 1717. There were thirty-four of these patents, which, collectively, secured great privileges to our trade in the way of exemption from duties and aggressions, while they gave us certain villages near Madras which had been the subject of dispute, and permitted the Company to rent the island of Diu, near Masulipatam, and to purchase the lordship of thirty-seven towns near Calcutta. We had before held, at Madras, a strip of coast, five miles long and one mile wide; at Bombay, a small island, all rock and salt marsh; and in Bengal, little more than the plot of ground on which Calcutta stood. By this great charter of 1717, as the English considered it, we became possessed of both banks of the river, for an extent of ten miles below Calcutta. The expectations of the merchants at home were unbounded, now that such a footing was obtained in the rich province of Bengal—all risks and burdens being at the same time removed, as far as the authority of the Court of Delhi extended. The patents had been rather expensive, it is true, and so was the embassy which obtained them by bribes from the debased Mogul sovereign, Furücksur; and some of the stipulations were evaded by the local rulers; but it was not doubted that the profits under the new system would soon pay for all. This did not turn out true, however. The

commerce of the Company did not increase, even though the taste for tea became wonderfully developed in Europe. At any time within the following thirty years the commerce of the Company might be shown to have been nearly equalled by that of single firms in London.

Yet were the English regarded in India, not exactly as "a nation of shopkeepers," for the natives had been told that Europe did not contain more than ten thousand men altogether—but as a sort of pedlar caste. The French had establishments, imitated from ours, as ours were from the Dutch—presidencies ruled by a governor, with the help of a council, composed of senior merchants, while the lower offices were filled by junior merchants, factors and writers; and yet the French were regarded as a military people, and admired accordingly, long before we were supposed to be anything but shopkeepers. The reason assigned for this contrasted estimate is that the French were the first to discover the two great secrets of European strength in India: that European strength depended essentially on military prestige; and that the native soldier was susceptible of training in European discipline. While the few native soldiers, first retained at Bombay, and then at Madras, were still the disorderly ill-armed peons that they were when taken into pay, the French authorities were training and arming

their native bands (as well as the blacks from Africa), and were not long in convincing their Mahratta neighbours that, however it might be, with the English, there were other Europeans who were equal to war, and had a liking for it. The time was at hand for a change in Mogul and Mahratta public opinion in regard to the British.

The French had two presidencies in the East—one at the Isle of France and the other at Pondicherry. Their three factories in India were subject to the Pondicherry government—one on the Malabar and another on the Coromandel coast; and a third, Chandernagore, on the Hooghly, 23 miles above Calcutta.

In 1732 commerce seemed to be under an evil star in that Bengal region. The English government reduced their dividends that year, notwithstanding the splendid terms they had obtained from Delhi: and as for the French factory at Chandernagore, it was in a truly beggarly state. Commerce seemed to be extinct; there was not a vessel of any class at its wharf; and poverty and license divided the lives of the wretched inhabitants of the wooden huts which constituted the settlement. An able man arrived as manager; and stone dwellings rose up in the place of wooden huts, to the number of two thousand: and, instead of a dead stillness at the waterside, from twelve to fifteen vessels a day were coming and going. The hour and the man had arrived for the

French; and the hour and the man were approaching for the English. While the great Dupleix was beginning his reforms there in the prime vigour of his years, a child in England was giving almost as much annoyance to his relations as he was hereafter to cause to Dupleix. The Spaniards say that "the thorn comes into the world point foremost." It was so in this case. The uncle of little Robert Clive, then in his seventh year, wrote a sad character of him. "Fighting, to which he is out of measure addicted," said the uncle, "gives his temper such a fierceness and imperiousness, that he flies out on every trifling occasion." At the same date, there was born in a poor parsonage in Worcestershire a forlorn infant, the son of a father married at sixteen, and soon after dead, and of a mother who died in a few days after the orphan's birth, leaving him to the care of a grandfather, sunk in trouble and poverty. No one living could then have divined what connection could exist among the destinies of these three. Nor would it have been easier to guess seven years later. At that later date, Dupleix had purchased no less than seventy vessels, to carry his commodities to all parts of the known world, extinguishing in Bengal the English reputation for commercial ability, and bringing splendid returns to his own coffers. Robert Clive was then full of mischief—sitting on a spout at the top of the lofty steeple of Market Drayton church, and levying a blackmail of apples

and halfpence, with his rabble rout of naughty boys at his heels, on the tradesmen who feared for their windows. As for little Warren, the orphan, then seven years old, he was lying beside the brook which flows through the lands of his ancestry, and, as he himself told afterwards, making up his mind to the personal ambition of his life—to be, like his forefathers of several generations, Hastings of Daylesford. On these three—the ambitious and unscrupulous French manager, already at his work, the turbulent English schoolboy, and the romantic child, dreaming under the great ancestral oaks, while living and learning among ploughboys—the destinies of British India were to hang. Through them we were to hold India as a territory, and by a military tenure; and to have a policy there, perhaps as important to the human race in the long run as that of the mother-country—however much may be comprehended in that abstraction.

In 1739, Nadir Shah took Delhi, after a victorious march from Persia. Alternate massacres defiled the city, and left it half empty, as plunder left it bare of its pomp and grandeur. The Mogul sovereigns had declined in authority from the death of Aurungzebe; and now they were the mere victims of their viceroys. The empire was broken up into a greater number of states than it is here necessary to particularise; and, in the mutual rivalry which sprang up in all directions, now that there was no central power to repress

such feuds, it was natural that the chiefs should try, while estimating their resources, what they could make of the English and French. The foreigners, on their part, found this a good opportunity for carrying out in the East the hostilities which were beginning once more in Europe between their respective nations. Thus the native Soubahdars or Nabobs courted the Europeans for the sake of their superiority in civilization and military discipline; and the Europeans, in return, took up the quarrels of the native states, in the prosecution of the war between England and France; and as a struggle for supremacy in India. When Nadir Shah sacked Delhi, England and France were contending against each other in a war which was called Spanish; but by 1744 they were in undisguised war with each other. It was in the interval that the governors of the French presidencies in India, foreseeing the coming war, made all ready for humbling the English, while both implicated themselves in alliance with their native neighbours, for purposes of attack and defence. Dupleix had been summoned from Bengal to rule at Pondicherry just at the time when Clive went out to Madras, as a writer, at the age of 17—poor, arrogant, dissatisfied, and in that mood which is common to young persons of strong self-will, who believe that nobody likes them, and suspect that nobody cares for them. He grew more sullen and wretched every day, and twice attempted his life—learning a proud

fatalism from the accidental failure of his purpose on both occasions; and meantime, Dupleix was giving out that he had received investiture and diplomas from Delhi, in virtue of which he was a Soubahdar, and the brother in rank of the Nabobs who commanded the states of the Deccan. In that capacity he promised his neighbours the possession of Madras, and the complete subjection of the English; and he would no doubt have performed his engagements if Clive had not appeared in time to baffle him.

The governor of the other French presidency, Labourdonnais, had been preparing, in the Isle of France, for the outbreak of war between France and England. There was no reason to suppose that the English could withstand at sea the united forces of France and Spain; and Labourdonnais did, in fact, land his troops, in spite of the English ships of war, and appear before Madras with his force of 1,700 or 1,800 men, of whom 400 were trained sepoys, and 400 Africans, disciplined in the same way. The fort of St. George was a mere enclosure within a thin wall, with four bastions and four batteries for defence, and containing about fifty houses, with the warehouses and two churches. The other divisions of the town were almost undefended. There were only 300 Europeans, of whom two-thirds were the garrison, and the remaining 100 as yet by no means warlike. The place was bombarded for five days; and during

that time the besieged made offers of ransom; but Labourdonnais wanted to show all India the spectacle of French colours flying from the richest of the English settlements; and he proposed to be satisfied with a moderate ransom, and to restore the settlement to the English, if they would yield up the place for a time. He was received into the town without the loss of a man. Only four or five were killed on the English side, and two or three houses destroyed. The keys were delivered to him; his commissaries were set over the magazines and warehouses, but the British were left at large on parole. Here Dupleix interfered. As governor in the Indian presidency, he claimed the disposal of Madras and of everything in it. He declared that it should be razed to the ground. Labourdonnais could show that his orders from home expressly justified the terms he had made; but Dupleix succeeded in obtaining delay till his rival should have gone home to his government. He caused the evacuation of Madras, and carried the English to Pondicherry, and through the place, as captives—the governor himself being made to head the ignominious procession. These breaches of the terms of capitulation exasperated the Madras people as much as they afflicted Labourdonnais; and, by common consent, the British were absolved from their parole by the sins of Dupleix. Clive, for one, escaped in the disguise of a Mussulman;

and the Nabob of Arcot and his French ally had cause to rue the bad faith by which they had uncaged such a foe.

Clive, and others who escaped, betook themselves to Fort St. David's—a small English settlement a few miles south of Pondicherry. There Clive prepared himself for the military vocation for which nature had clearly destined him. As an ensign in the small force commanded by Major Lawrence he prepared not only himself, but the native soldiers, for the deeds waiting to be done. A comrade in the civil service, Haliburton, had devoted himself to making good soldiers of the disorderly band of peons who were in Fort St. George when it was taken by the French; but Haliburton, become a lieutenant for this object, was murdered on parade by a sepoy, who was instantly cut to pieces by his comrades. Clive seems to have been deeply affected by the event, for he declared in after years that his success in securing the fidelity of the sepoys was owing to his care “to entwine his laurels round the opinions and prejudices of the natives.” It does not appear that Haliburton had offended those “opinions and prejudices;” nor is there evidence that Clive had exercised his sagacity in considering what must be the issues of a military system based on the principle he professed, and how those issues must be dealt with. Our present concern is only with the facts of

how he felt, and how he acted in inaugurating a native soldiery.

At Fort St. David's the English intrigued with the native chiefs, much as the French had done, and not more creditably. They took sides, and changed sides, in the disputes of rival claimants to the province of Tanjore, under the inducement of the possession of Devi-cottah, a coast station at the mouth of the Coleroon. There was no great honour in the results, any more than in the conception, of this first little war. We obtained Devi-cottah; but we did not improve our reputation for good faith, nor lessen the distance between the French and ourselves in military prestige. But Dupleix was meantime providing the opportunity for Clive to determine whether the Deccan should be under French or English influence.

It was disconcerting to Dupleix for the moment that peace was made between France and England. It seemed to break up his scheme of converting the Deccan into a French dependency; but he presently resolved not to shape his actions by the policy of his own government, but by that of his Mahratta neighbours. The greatest of the southern princes, the Nizam al Mulk, Viceroy of the Deccan, died in 1748; and rivals rose up, as usual, to claim both his throne and the richest province under his rule—the Carnatic. The pretenders on one side applied to the French for assistance, and obtained reinforce-

ments to the extent of 400 French soldiers and 2,000 trained sepoys. This aid secured victory; the opposing prince was slain; and his son, the well-known Mohammed Ali, "the Nabob of Arcot" of the last century, took refuge, with a few remaining troops, at Trichinopoly. In a little while, the French seemed to be supreme throughout the country. Dupleix was deferred to as the arbiter of the destinies of the native princes, while he was actually declared Governor of India, from the Kistna to Cape Comorin—a region as large as France, inhabited by 30,000,000 of people, and defended by a force so large that the cavalry alone amounted to 7,000 under the command of Dupleix. In the midst of this dominion, the English looked like a handful of dispirited and helpless settlers, awaiting the disposal of the haughty Frenchman. Their native ally had lost everything but Trichinopoly; and Trichinopoly itself was now besieged by the Nabob of the Carnatic and his French supporters. Dupleix was greater than even the Mogul sovereign; he had erected a column in his own honour, displaying on its four sides inscriptions in four languages, proclaiming his glory as the first man of the East; and a town had sprung up round this column, called his City of Victory. To the fatalistic mind of the native races it seemed a settled matter that the French rule was supreme, and that the English must perish out of the land.

Major Lawrence had gone home; and the small force of the English had no commander. Clive was as yet only a commissary, with the rank of captain, and regarded more as a civilian than a soldier. He was only five-and-twenty. His superiors were in extreme alarm, foreseeing that when Trichinopoly was taken, the next step would be the destruction of Madras. Nothing could make their position worse; and they caught at every chance of making it better. Clive offered to attack Arcot, the capital of the Carnatic, in the hope that this would draw away the besiegers from Trichinopoly; and the offer was accepted. The force consisted of two hundred British and three hundred native soldiers, commanded, under Clive, by four factors and four military men, only two of whom had ever been in action. Everything was against them, from numbers and repute to the weather; but Clive took Arcot, and (what was much more difficult) kept it. The garrison had fled in a panic; but it was invested by 10,000 men before the British had repaired half its dilapidations and deficiencies, or recruited their numbers, now reduced to 320 men in all, commanded by four officers. For fifty days, amidst fatigue, hunger, and a hundred pressing dangers, the little band sustained the siege. It was then that the sepoys made their celebrated proposal about the division of food—an anecdote which is usually impaired

in the telling by the omission of the main circumstance, of the entrance of caste considerations into the case. The sepoy's represented to Clive that, though they could not eat food cooked by Christians, the Christians could eat food cooked by natives; and therefore it would be best that the sepoy's should cook the rice, pledging themselves to hand over to the Europeans every grain of the rice, and keeping for themselves only the gruel—the water in which the rice was boiled. This was in consideration of the ordinary high feeding of flesh-eating Europeans. At length a rival Mahratta force took heart on seeing that the English could fight, after all, and moved to their relief. The besiegers made haste to storm the fort before succours could arrive. They were repelled with desperate gallantry, under chances which were something more than desperate; and, to the amazement of Clive, the foe decamped in the night, leaving guns and ammunition as booty to the English.

A series of victories followed, and men and opinion came round to the side of the victors. There was no energy at headquarters to sustain Clive in his career; and the consequence was a prevalent belief among the Mahrattas that Clive had a particular species of English about him, unlike all others. In his absence, the enemy appeared again before Fort George, and did much

damage; but Clive came up, and 100 of the French soldiers were killed or taken. He uprooted Dupleix's boasting monument, and levelled the city to the ground, thereby reversing the native impression of the respective destinies of the French and English. Major Lawrence returned. Dupleix's military incapacity was proved, and his personal courage found wanting as soon as fortune deserted him. Trichinopoly was relieved, and the besiegers were beaten, and their candidate prince put to death. Dupleix struggled in desperation for some time longer before he gave up the contest; and Clive had his difficulties in completing the dislodgment of the French. Newly raised sepoys and vagabond recruits were given him to work with; and he had to make his tools and do his work at the same time. He did it; but nearly at the sacrifice of his life. When the British supremacy in the Deccan was completely established, he returned in bad health to England. He had gone out in 1742 a headstrong boy, whom everybody was glad to get rid of. He returned in 1752, a gallant young victor, whom his country delighted to honour. He had begun our military career with the capture of Arcot. He left behind him Dupleix, for whom a summons home in disgrace was on the way, and who died broken-hearted after ten years of conflict with the accusations of his employers and the ingratitude of the State. There

was another whom Clive left behind; the romantic orphan, now a youth of twenty, who had heard, at his desk at Calcutta, of the deeds of Robert Clive, and who was just now moving up the river to an improved position in the factory near the Nabob of Bengal, where he no doubt saw his way opening more favourably to his project of becoming, one day, Hastings of Daylesford. The two young men were soon to meet.

CHAPTER VII.

BEGINNING OF A POLICY.

1740—1760.

“Therefore let any prince or state think soberly of his forces, except his militia of natives be of good and valiant soldiers.”

BACON.

“Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,
The fatal shadows that walk by us still.”

JOHN FLETCHER.

THE French policy in India during the period just reviewed made the Madras Presidency the centre of English interests for the time. After the discomfiture of Dupleix, and his return in deep adversity to Paris, Bengal became the scene of conflict, and the ground on which the English established a power and prestige as wonderful as Dupleix had ever proposed to achieve for France. A few particulars must be noted about Madras, and then we must follow the interest of the story to Calcutta.

In the midst of his glory as the hero of Arcot, and the patriot who had humbled Dupleix and his French policy, Clive met with disappointments in England which disposed him to return to India at the very

time when the Directors were anxious to send him. Three years after his return home, there was a prospect of war with France; and Clive's presence on the Coromandel coast was considered the best security to our Indian establishments that could be provided. So the Directors appointed him Governor of Fort St. David, and the administration made him lieutenant-colonel in the British army; and he went out for the second time in 1755.

The first notice of sepoys in British pay occurs in connection with the early history of Bombay. The first occasion on which they are mentioned with honour is the defence of Arcot, when Clive inspired all his followers with the military spirit which made him a hero from the moment when he left his desk for the field. The sepoys were delighted to see him back again at Fort St. David, and were ready to do anything under his command. At that time none had been enlisted but men of high military tribes—part Mohammedans and part Hindoos, the latter chiefly Rajpoots.* They were small men (from five feet three to five feet five), active, strong, patient and brave in temper, and temperate in diet, but while possessing most of the great qualities of the soldier, requiring peculiar management. As long as no suspicion was awakened in their minds, they were devoted, trustful, patient, and even upright under stress; but when once their

* A warlike race of the first order, originally derived from Rajastan.

high honour was touched, or they suspected deceit or ridicule, they were enemies for ever, as implacable and vindictive as devils. Every mistake on the part of the English, every lapse into forgetfulness that English methods alone will never answer with Asiatic soldiers, has been marked by a mutiny, for above a century past. An order to go round by sea to Bombay produced a mutiny, the natives having an extreme horror of "the black water," as they call the ocean; whereas, when an officer whom they knew told them that he and his European soldiers were going on an enterprise overland, and needed a force of volunteers, there were always enough ready to go. An order to shave is never obeyed, for reasons of native feeling which no commander should be ignorant of; and an attempt to enforce the order has repeatedly induced mutiny. Very few persons in England have any idea of the number of sepoy mutinies which have occurred between the defence of Arcot, which opened our military history in India, and the present calamity, of which the entire series should have forewarned us. It would be too much to say that on all these occasions the British were totally wrong; but it may be safely declared that a sufficient knowledge of the native mind would have explained to us how it was that the mutineers always were vehemently persuaded that they were right. Some promise was supposed to be broken, something was required of them which they could not do, some

insult was offered to their pride or their affections, or some novelty was introduced to which they could not commit themselves till they understood its bearings. They would serve without a murmur while their pay was two or three years in arrear; they would endure famine and other hardship with unsurpassed generosity of spirit; but they required peculiar consideration from their peculiarities of mind and training. It was for the English to consider whether it was worth while to make soldiers of them under such conditions; but neither party is to be blamed for the existence of the conditions. It might be burdensome to have to cultivate the language, and learn the mind, of the native soldier; but he could not be a trustworthy soldier on other terms. Such pains have always been found to answer. Clive succeeded entirely with them; so did Sir Eyre Coote; and so did many more good commanders, during a long series of years. They had them well in hand. They did not waste their authority in making a point of shaven chins and compulsory sea voyages; but they allowed no hesitation or question about such orders as they gave. They carefully studied their men; and they took care that their men should know them. The consequence was that a native officer here and there—such as Mohammed Escof, Cawder Beg, Sheik Ibrahim, and several others, rose into companionship of fame with distinguished European officers, and that officers who were fit to command them, from

Clive and Coote to Lake, Ochterlony, and Christie, could do anything with them, and had little other difficulty than to restrain the enthusiasm of their obedience. Whatever may be the issue of the present mutiny, the memory of a better time will be preserved among the sepoys in two sacred forms—the native traditions of the deaths and funerals of popular European officers, and the monuments—the “regimental shrines”—which grateful rulers and commanders have from time to time erected or countenanced, to the memory of heroic native officers.

The Body-guard at Madras has always held a high rank among the native soldiery—a hundred strong, always expected to be foremost in zeal and efficiency, and always found in its place. It was such a soldiery as that that Clive was greeted by when he re-appeared at Fort St. David, and that he took with him when he was presently after summoned to Bengal.

Just at the time that Nadir Shah was sacking Delhi, in 1739, a remarkable man, of Tartar descent, obtained from the miserable successor of Aurungzebe the post of Viceroy of Bengal, and the added provinces of Orissa and Berar. This man, Aliverdi, met with little resistance within those provinces; and he presently overcame such as was offered. His rule appears to have been singularly good, for the country and the time—spirited, just, and humane; but he could not make his people prosperous and

happy, while the Marhattas were abroad. It has been related that the Marhattas extended their predatory expeditions to Bengal, tempted by the rich products of the district; and that they left all bare unless they were bought off. The salt of the low coasts and islands supplied a want which has always pressed heavily on the vegetation population of India. The rice crops were unparalleled;—they had nothing of the spice and sugar; and the products of foreign trade were stored up along the river. It was on account of the Marhattas that the English had fortified Calcutta. When Aliverdi was going home to Moorsshedabad, after humbling his last domestic enemy, he heard that the Marhattas had come through the passes from Berar to invade Bengal. He met them bravely with his small force; but some of his troops did not support him well, and he ran fearful risks in getting home. The enemy had been there before him, pillaging the suburbs, and, among other places, Cossimbazar, where Warren Hastings worked at his desk. The enemy chose to remain during the rains; and what they saw of the wealth of the soil gave them all possible inclination to help themselves to it as often as convenient. They collected the revenue of almost the whole country south of the Ganges. Aliverdi beat them out with great slaughter as soon as the weather permitted. Of course they returned next year; and Aliverdi unfortunately paid ransom for his fields and

commerce. The approach of a marauding force is a hideous thing in Bengal. The inhabitants bury their heaviest chattels, and fly to the nearest refuge—the jungle, the hills, or a fortress. The husband carries a bag of grain, the wife the young children; and the growing crops must take their chance. In course of time it was discovered that this ruin need not always be incurred—that the peasantry need not be “wulsa” when British troops were coming, unless, indeed, they brought Indian allies with them; but in Aliverdi’s time there was no exception to the rule of flight and ruin when any soldiery was on the march. His subjects were as poor as could well be in the best times; any hostile incursion brought on famine and destruction, and desperate means of prevention were used. One year the Mahratta leader was inveigled and assassinated; another year, the Mahratta leader was killed in battle; but the enemy still came back; and, in a third year, Aliverdi’s discontented subjects went over to the Mahrattas, and all seemed over; but he again beat them off, even recovering the capital of Orissa, which he had considered lost. But when he died, in 1756, in old age, he had only impoverished his people by annual levies of blackmail, without purchasing with it any security from danger. Leaving no sons, he was succeeded by a youthful grandson—the Surajah Dowla, whose name was so familiar to English ears during the latter half

of the last century. It is enough to say of him that he² was one of the worst known specimens of the worst known order of men—Asiatic princes who are not nomades. He had always hated the English; and his first act, after securing the property of all his relations for his own use, was to quarrel with the British. He demanded that the finance minister of his deceased uncle, the Governor of Dacca, should be delivered up to him from his refuge at Calcutta, with the treasure he was supposed to have saved; and he remonstrated with the English governor for improving the British defences, in anticipation of a war with France. Instead of accepting the explanation afforded, he seized the factory at Cossimbazar, and captured its chief, Mr. Watts. The English had no Clive among them at the moment, and resistance does not seem to have occurred to them. They offered an abject submission; and the Nabob marched to Calcutta, to seize the enormous wealth which he supposed to be laid up there, and to show himself a great man in comparison with the contemptible foreigners.

It is an interesting thing to pause, at this point of the history, to see how those personages were engaged who were to shape and control coming events, or to be controlled by them. Dupleix was off the scene. He had originated the scheme of European supremacy in India, and had handed it over to the

rival power. His colleague in presidential government, Labourdonnais, had created the instrument of a sepoy force, which also remained in English hands. Both were to suffer from the ingratitude of the State at home, and to die in misery. Thus it was with the rival European party. As for the natives—Surajah Dowla (the actual sovereign of Bengal, while called Viceroy) was getting drunk, killing flies, putting beasts and birds to the torture, for pastime, and merchants, when he wanted their treasure. He informed his courtiers that there were not 10,000 men in all Europe, and he should treat the English as he pleased.

He had very close relations with a few wealthy men, as needy and despotic sovereigns are wont to have. One of the rich merchants whom the Viceroy cultivated for the sake of his usefulness was Omichund, an able intriguer, living at Calcutta, who played off his arts on his sovereign and on the English as suited his convenience, now promising the Viceroy to cast all the British wealth into his treasury, and then agreeing with the English to depose the Viceroy, and put Meer Jaffier, the native commander-in-chief, in his place. Another of these rich and powerful subjects was the well-known Nuncomar—the Hindoo Brahmin, who was, perhaps, the greatest Bengalee of his time—politic, wealthy, sacred in a religious view, and invested with all possible secular deference. Meer Jaffier was at the head of the army, hardly yet, perhaps,

1760.]

PERSON

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away the English, and take possession of their wealth, keeping a few of their chief men to torment, for the gratification of his hatred; and there was not so much rashness in his scheme as might appear. In Bengal it was still believed, as not long before in Madras, that the British were only traders, and could not fight. Their conduct, when Surajah Dowla marched his great army to Calcutta, justified this notion. It appeared before the fort on the 18th of June, 1756: and as the fort really was very weak, and no Clive was there, everybody was in favour of retreat to the ships. The Governor fled first and fastest, and the military commander next: no proper arrangements were made for the embarkation, and all was confusion and selfish panic. Surajah Dowla was presently seated in state in the great hall of the factory, triumphing over the English captives who were brought before him. He complained of the smallness of the treasure, but promised to spare the lives of the prisoners. He went to rest without giving orders as to what was to be done with them. There was an apartment which had been sometimes used as a strong-room for prisoners—unobjectionable in itself, but, being only 18 feet square, fit only for two or three persons at once, in such a climate as that of Calcutta. It had two windows, was above ground, and in no respect like “a dungeon” or “a black hole.” Yet it will be called “the Black

Hole of Calcutta" as long as the language lasts, on account of what happened there that night. The prisoners, in number 146, were ordered into this apartment; and when it was declared to be full, more and more were driven in at the point of the bayonet: and there they were kept through the summer night. No entreaties or frantic cries for release or air were of any avail: the Viceroy was asleep, and must not be disturbed. While he was enjoying his airy rest, the English were dying off fast; and when he drew near his waking, their shrieks had sunk into a few low moans. When the door was at length opened in the morning, 23 of the 146 were alive, but so shrunk and ghastly that their own families would not have known them. Of the dead, some were as far gone into decay as if they had been buried for days. The murder was not intentional: but there was cruelty enough without that. The guards came with lights to the barred windows to laugh at the delirious wretches struggling within; the Viceroy threatened the survivors with impalement if they did not confess where the treasure was; and he caused them to be ironed and half starved. The surviving Englishwoman he took into his own hareem. He boasted, in letters to Delhi, of having expelled the English, and abolished the very name of Calcutta, which he named Aliganore—*God's port*. It was August before the news reached Madras;

and, in spite of Clive's impatience, it was October before the forces were off, and December before they reached Calcutta, having found the fugitive English collected at Fulta, a small place further down the river.

Surajah Dowla came down from his capital, and, already pining after the profits of the English trade, proposed terms. He offered to reinstate the British, with compensation for their losses. Clive was almost the only person concerned who was not disposed to accept the terms at once. The Company's agents, the Madras Government, and, as he was well aware, the Directors at home all considered reinstatement to be all that could be desired. But he was aware that Surajah Dowla was intriguing with the French, with the intention of bringing them down upon the British, on all convenient occasions. This was the time, Clive decided, to establish the English in Bengal, as on the Coromandel coast; and he obtained the concurrence of the naval commander, Admiral Watson, in his scheme for humbling the French first, and then deposing the Viceroy. In the attack on Chandernagore, Admiral Watson operated by water, and Clive by land, with complete success. The French settlement, with all its stores, at once fell into their hands.

The agents in the other scheme were Omichund, the great Hindoo merchant already spoken of, and Mr. Watts, who was taken at Cossimbazar. A plot already existed among the Viceroy's subjects, in

which his finance minister, his commander-in-chief, Meer Jaffier (already mentioned), and other conspicuous men were implicated; and Clive overbore all the scruples of the committee at Calcutta about embracing the scheme. When the Viceroy was distrustful, Omichund soothed him; and he was so ready to do the same thing on the English side, that Clive not only put no faith in him, but deceived and betrayed him as he deceived and betrayed one master, if not more. Clive even stooped so low as to interpolate a duplicate deed, and to forge a signature, in order to retain the great Hindoo's services as long as they were wanted. When all was ready, Clive wrote an upbraiding letter to the Viceroy, who at once marched to Plassey to meet the British. There would have been no difficulty in beating him, vast as his forces were, if Clive's native confederates could have been trusted to fulfil their engagements. But they did not come over; and the British had only 3,200 men to oppose to the 68,000 assembling on the opposite bank of the river. For the only time in his life, Clive held a council of war. It was decided to retreat, and he acquiesced—in all sincerity at the moment; but his spirit rose as the night drew on. He transferred his force to the left bank of the river, and the next day, June 23, 1757, fought the battle of Plassey, which revolutionized Bengal, and inaugurated the English policy in Hindostan. Surajah Dowla fled. Meer Jaffier, who had held back till

which marked him out for political business; and he appointed him resident agent at the new Nabob's court. ' Soon after Clive's departure in 1760, Hastings was wanted at Calcutta, as a member of council. He was in full training for his future work.

CHAPTER VIII.

BEGINNING OF A GENERAL GOVERNMENT.

1760—1774.

“Mais, en connaissant votre condition naturelle, usez des moyens qui lui sont propres, et ne prétendez pas régner par une autre voie que par celle qui vous fait roi.”—PASCAL.

“We are not roasting; and already we are basting.”—*Proverb.*

It is a recognised fact that a bad odour hangs about our connection with India, even at this day, among peoples and generations who can give no clear account of the grounds of their unfavourable impressions. Among the continental nations, in the United States, and throughout whole classes at home, and among the elderly generation in particular, a vague notion exists that there is something disgraceful in our tenure of India; that the native population has been somehow sacrificed to our ambition and cupidity; and that the great Asiatic peninsula has always been a land of license to us, where selfish men could indulge their passions, and extort luxury at the moment, and wealth for the future, from an inferior race, made to suffer

for our gratification. While the great multitude have held some such notion as this, a very small minority has wondered how so enormous a mistake could exist. The few who have taken an interest in the India of our own day have dwelt upon the features of modern Indian life till they wonder whether the history of any nation presents a picture of a more virtuous devotion to public duty. They point to the honourable mediocrity of fortune of Indian officials, the small salaries, the refusal of gifts from natives, the hard work, the *désagrémens* of life in such a climate, and, above all, to the succession of great and good men who have grown up, lived, and too often died, in India; and they ask whether history has anything better to show in regard to any great dependency of any empire. There is, as usual, reason at the bottom of both persuasions; and we have now arrived at the period of Indian experience which reconciles the two. The more advantageous view is now true in the main; and the other was true a century ago. The state of things was, moreover, as inevitable as it was detestable.

It was the transition period between native despotism and British government. Territorial possession (to the extent which made us rulers of the people) was suddenly obtained, almost without intention, and altogether without preparation. Principalities and peoples became ours before any

one had thought how they were to be ruled, or how the structure and movement of society were to be sustained at all. If the question was by chance asked, what was to be done with the provinces and their inhabitants, the readiest answer was that they would be governed by the native princes, under us; the supposition being that the various tribes had some sort of constitution which bridged over all intervals, and all turmoils incident to princely government. Here was the great mistake. No such constitutions existed. The rule of the princes, whether hereditary or usurping, was a simple absolutism, with which the spirit of Mohammedanism was thoroughly congenial, and to which even the old religious institutions of Hindooism were made subservient; and our plan of using the native princes as our deputies merely rendered their subjects dependent, one and all, on our will. Every Englishman was master of every native he came across, for there was no constitution, no appropriate law, no organization whatever to be appealed to. The few of our countrymen who had gone out in the service of the Company, on very small salaries, and with no very elevated objects, suddenly found the treasure-chambers of absolute princes thrown open to them; and when those were emptied, there remained the sources whence they had been filled. The competitors for native thrones begged for British support,

promising in requital the wealth of the ruler who was to be unseated; and every such petty revolution brought its own premium to those who could effect it. English traders had not only the pick and choice of all markets, but they held all producers in their grasp; and they could lay hands on all products at their own price, and make it a condition of all transactions that presents should be offered to the powerful party. They could always patronize robbers, and ruin everybody, unless propitiated by gifts; and it may be doubted whether the Danes in England, the Spaniards in Mexico, or the Mahrattas in Aliverdi's time, were more disastrously oppressive to a harassed multitude of native inhabitants than the Englishmen who were making their fortunes in Bengal while Clive was in England recruiting his health, from 1760 to 1765. The people who were within reach of the hills went there, and became robbers. The peasants fled to the jungle—not from British troops, but from the face of a British merchant traversing the country in state. Whole villages were deserted when a European was coming along the road. The country was going out of cultivation, and the native manufacturers were discontinuing their industry from year to year, just when it was necessary to raise more and more money for the Company at home; and hence new and more stringent methods of extortion were perpetually devised. No party concerned was less aware of all this than the Direc-

tors in London. They saw how rich the English became in India, from Clive who returned at thirty-four with an income of 40,000*l.* a year, to the humblest agent who, not liking India, came home at five-and-twenty with a competence for life. The Directors heard, as other people did, of the pomps and splendours of the native courts, and also of the prodigious fertility of the soil in Bengal; and they naturally expected to derive a handsome revenue from both land and commerce. They could not fully know how their servants grew rich by private trading; and they were naturally the last to hear of the bribes and oppressions by which the people were sunk in poverty. They shaped their demands in proportion to what they saw; and their urgency was so extreme as to cause constant embarrassment to their own governors at the presidencies. Their blindness and the little monopolies of their servants must come to an end, sooner or later, as every adventurer in the whole set well knew: the great object with them all was to delay the disclosure of the poverty of India as long as possible; and under the strength of this overwhelming temptation the greatest men sank as well as the meanest. Clive and Hastings committed crimes as well as the little tyrants who took the poor weaver's finest muslins, and paid less than the price of the cotton.

If our young people desire to know how the Anglo-Indians of ninety years ago were regarded in

England in their own day, they may find the evidence in short compass in Cowper's poem of "Expostulation," where the national view is fairly expressed in a dozen lines :

"Hast thou, though suckled at fair Freedom's breast,
Exported slavery to the conquered East ?
Pulled down the tyrants India served with dread,
And raised thyself, a greater, in their stead ?
Gone thither, armed and hungry; returned full,
Fed from the richest veins of the Mogul,
A despot big with power obtained by wealth,
And that obtained by rapine and by stealth ?
With Asiatic vices stored thy mind,
But left their virtues and thine own behind ?
And, having trucked thy soul, brought home the fee,
To tempt the poor to sell himself to thee ?"

Worse even than the cupidity was the treachery. Clive's treatment of Omichund was truly a national calamity. Recent times have so fully proved the value in India of our good faith, so remarkable a contrast to the prevailing policy of native rulers, that there is no need to say a word of the benefits we have derived from an Englishman's word being the only security the natives know. It is referred to only to illustrate the mischief caused by Clive's interpolation and forgery in Omichund's case. As thieves have a keen sense of the convenience of honesty, so have intriguers of the dignity of good faith; and Clive inflicted more injury on our Indian empire than many years could repair when he (as he said with shocking levity) turned the arts of the great

Hindoo against himself. During the same interval, the ignorant traders who were representing us in Bengal were over-riding the native tribunals, jesting at the native faith and customs, and setting aside all observances for their own convenience or amusement; so that a state of anarchy was inevitable, and Clive was as much wanted at the factory at Calcutta as he had been before the walls of Arcot, or on the field at Plassey.

Everything was going wrong when the Company applied to Clive to return to Bengal. The confusion was too much for the capacity of successive governors. Meer Jaffier and a rival pretender to the vice-royalty were set up and pulled down in turns; and at every see-saw the adherents of the one pillaged those of the other, to bribe the English. Nothing more could be levied from the people, and the Company could obtain no adequate remittances. Princes outside the frontier rose against us; and the native soldiery mutinied.

The sepoy complained of various breaches of promise, and refused to obey orders. Their coolness under sentence, and the singular dignity with which some of the condemned claimed to be blown away from right-hand and not left-hand guns, because they had always fought on the right, and considered it the post of honour, melted their executioners, and witnesses who had been less moved at Admiral Byng's last scene. While the troops were resisting orders, their com-

manders were quarrelling. In every department of the Company's affairs, there was nothing but confusion, failure, and prospect of total disorganization.

Clive returned with a title, and with the dignity of Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the British possessions in Bengal; and the first thing he discovered was that though the Company had, as they supposed, put a stop to the traffic in presents between their servants and the political intriguers of the province, the throne of the Viceroy was virtually put up to sale, and jobbed by the Company's agents. He at once enforced the Directors' command that all presents and gratuities, in any shape, received from natives, should be handed over to the Company, when the value exceeded 4,000 rupees; and that every gift under that amount and exceeding 1,000 rupees, must be sanctioned by the President and Council. He put a stop to private commercial speculation; and when some of the angry gentlemen struck work, he wrote to Madras for substitutes, and sent the malcontents home. He enlarged the incomes thus suddenly restricted by awarding the salt monopoly to the Company's agents—the Directors being resolved against increasing their salaries. The military officials carried their resistance to reform so far as to conspire for his discomfiture, and resign on the same day, to the number of two hundred. It was then that Lord Clive found the advantage of his policy in attaching the sepoys. He separated them from their

mutinous superiors, and threw himself upon them, while awaiting the arrival of European officers from Fort George, and training some civilians from the Calcutta service. He could not have carried his points if he had been hampered by the "assistance" of the pre-existing committee of management, and he therefore named as his select committee himself and the two gentlemen who had attended him from England.

His territorial policy was soon declared. He wrote home that he had long foreseen the approach of the time when the Company must determine whether they should or should not "take all" into their own hands, and rule with an army at their back. The native states expected this, he said; and the English must be the real Nabobs, under a merely nominal vassalage to Delhi; whether they assumed the name, or still allowed a puppet to wear it. The Mogul sovereign was applied to, with presents; and he granted (because he could not refuse) a warrant whereby the Company was authorized to collect the revenues of the whole territory of Bengal, with its adjuncts of Orissa and Behar. This demonstration, and the mere presence of Clive, intimidated the neighbouring viceroys: and they at once drew back from the frontier they had intended to invade. He seemed to have set matters to rights in the course of a year and a half, when his state of health compelled him to go home. He had seven years more to live. They were years of great

trouble and failing powers of body and mind; and he died by his own hand at the age of forty-eight.

He was no sooner gone home than it was discovered that affairs were much further from being settled than he had supposed. He had mistaken the influence of his own strong will for the working of his machinery, as strong-willed men are apt to do. Neither he nor any one else could have an idea of the accession of another man of strong will and extraordinary ability, by whom the work he had left should be carried on as vigorously as it could be by himself. Warren Hastings had taken a disgust to India, and had gone home as soon as he was rich enough to do so—that is, in 1764, the year before Clive's last voyage out; and Clive had been nearly two years at home again before Hastings had lost his money by speculation, and found it necessary to go forth again, if he was ever to be owner of Daylesford. In the interval it became clear that Clive's methods would not work well in any department of administration, though his reforms had improved the moral strength and reputation of the English body. It was impossible that the fiction of subservience to the Mogul sovereign could run parallel with the exercise of absolute power for any length of time. It could be nothing more than a device for passing over from one territorial tenure to another; and it embarrassed both the foreign and domestic policy of Bengal. It was in reality our English strength which dominated

over the neighbouring viceroys, while the empty name of the Delhi sovereign was used. The internal management of the territory had to be confided (with the exception of military affairs) to a native minister; and it was difficult, in the first place, to fill the office well, and, in the next, to reconcile its existence with any real care of the land and the people. Whether a Mussulman or a Hindoo was appointed to that post of wealth and dignity, mischief was sure to ensue; and it was not possible to answer for good government while it remained in the hands of either. Thus, through this one political fiction, whereby Clive hoped to effect the English ascendancy in peace and quiet, there were always three obstacles in the way of honest English government—the nominal Sovereign of Hindostan at Delhi; his nominal Viceroy at Moorshedabad (his master and our servant); and the Prime Minister of the Viceroy, appointed by us, but wholly unqualified for doing our work, while sure to make mischief from being a member of one of two opposing native races.

Within the establishment at Calcutta, matters went no better. The committee was apt to split into factions, as such bodies usually are, and the more virulently the further they are from London. The President had only a casting vote in council, in case of an equal division; and nothing of importance could be done without the authority of the committee. Under these difficulties, everything went wrong. The reve-

nue fell off, though the arrangements at home between the Company and the Government supposed a large annual income: there were bitter conflicts among authorities and parties in London; and, in the midst of the confusion, a famine happened in India which exceeded in horror almost every famine recorded in history. There is no need to dwell on a spectacle which any one can conceive for himself. It is enough to say that more than a third of the inhabitants of Bengal perished in it. Some of the Company's agents were then found to have traded in rice, in defiance of Clive's reforms and the Directors' prohibitions; report magnified the offence, and made out a strong case of cupidity and cruelty—probably much stronger than the facts would warrant: the unpopularity of Anglo-Indians in London increased every day; the persuasion was strengthened in the popular mind that the whole concern would soon end in a crash; the eagerness of the proprietary for large dividends was sharpened accordingly; and in 1771 an augmentation of the dividend was insisted upon, though it was known that the treasury at Calcutta was nearly empty, and that the Company was in debt all over India. Such a state of adversity, and such evidences of misgovernment, threw the Company very much into the power of parliament. In order to obtain the means of going on at all, by loans and otherwise, it was necessary to submit to very hard conditions. From 12½ per cent.

per annum the dividends were to be reduced to about half; the territorial possessions of the Company were treated as liable to use in the way of pledge; and proposals were offered to change the entire constitution of the Company. The Proprietors and Directors were to permit a raising of their respective qualifications; and—what is more to our purpose in reviewing the story of the English in India—a Governor-General was to be installed at Calcutta, to rule over all the three presidencies—that of Bengal being the first in rank: four councillors were to be the cabinet of the new potentate; and a Supreme Court of Judicature was to be established at Calcutta, constituted of a Chief Justice and three other judges. The first body of new rulers were to be nominated by parliament for a term of five years, after which the nominations would revert to the Directors, subject to the approbation of the Crown: and all the functionaries of the Government and the courts were interdicted from all implication in commercial transactions.

These new arrangements became law in the Regulating Act of 1773. Warren Hastings had the year before been appointed Governor at Calcutta, in consequence of the ability he had manifested, from the time of his return to India, in retrieving the commercial condition of Madras, after its decline from the conversion of the merchants of that presidency into soldiers and diplomatists. Warren Has-

tings was the first Governor-General of India. We shall see how the introduction of English methods of law, and the mingling of English pretensions with Asiatic facts of government answered under the superintendence of a man of eminent and appropriate ability.

CHAPTER IX.

ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD,

1774—1785.

“A heart like mine,
 A heart that glows with the pure Julian fire,—
 If bright ambition from her craggy seat
 Display the radiant prize, will mount undaunted,
 Gain the rough heights, and grasp the dangerous honour.”

GRAY,

“What is here?—Gold!”—SHAKSPERE.

THE first Governor-General of India must be “the observed of all observers;” and his period of rule must be a marked era in the history, not only of the dependency itself, but of the country to which it belonged. If it must necessarily be so from the excitement of the public mind at home, under the agitating and disgusting news from Bengal in 1773, there was something in the mind and manners of the first Governor-General which rendered the crisis more marked, and the national interest more intense. Not a few of us who are living to receive the recent portentous tidings from India may remember the countenance and bearing of Warren Hastings; for he lived till 1818. It was a countenance not to be

forgotten by any one who had ever seen it, full of intellectual serenity, thoughtful, somewhat melancholy, but resolved and confident. His figure was small, but anything but insignificant, in connection with a demeanour of natural dignity, a complexion which revealed a life of toil, and a head which proved a capacity for it. When he sailed for India the second time, in 1769, he left the impression of this countenance on the minds of the first men of a day of great men, and with it a high respect for his literary and political cultivation. Johnson looked up to him for the philosophy he quoted from his Oriental learning, and our great scholars for that Oriental learning itself. Our statesmen could hardly have given him credit, then or at any time, for comprehensive political views; but his constant adequacy to the occasion, his evident familiarity with the native mind and modes of life, and his strong convictions of what ought to be done at a time when the responsible parties were only too thankful to be told what they ought to do, pointed out Warren Hastings as one for whom an office of high authority ought to be created at such a time, if it would not otherwise exist. He at once took in hand, as has been seen, the mischief which had arisen at Madras from the conversion of traders into military and political officials; and his being promoted to the highest post followed almost as a matter of course.

It should be borne in mind, in studying the history of this time, that the worst things we know of the miseries of the inhabitants are told in the form of lamentation and remonstrance expressed by the Directors to their servants in India. The letters are extant in which they complained that every attempt they had made to reform abuses had increased them, and that the industrial classes of natives were more oppressed for every effort to protect them. "Youths" were suffered to domineer over whole communities, even as sovereigns, and to enrich themselves by monopolies, at the expense of the natives on the one hand, and of the Company on the other. The native merchants no longer appeared in the markets; the products found their way to Europe through every channel but the British; and the Company must be ruined unless an able head and hand could inaugurate on the spot a new system, first legalised at home. Such are the complaints of the Directors in their correspondence of April, 1773.

Who were these terrible "youths" who excited so much indignation in high quarters? They were the Supervisors, afterwards Collectors, a body of officials whose advent marked the transition of British India from being a new field of commerce to being a possession, requiring political administration. The failure of Clive's plan of double government, under which all the old evils remained, while the authority to deal with them was abstracted,

compelled a resort to some new method of obtaining the dues of the British establishment. The native collectors declared that they could not obtain money, the Mogul governors declared that they could not get their commands obeyed, in the administration of criminal and civil justice; and the people meantime pleaded for protection from every kind of spoliation. In 1769 it was decided that servants of the Company should be dispersed throughout the country, each superintending a district from a central station whence he could observe and control the native officers in their work of collecting the revenue, and also of administering justice. As these overlookers were soon found to need overlooking themselves, two councils were appointed for the purpose, to sit at Moorshedabad and at Patna. No benefit being observable at the end of two years, and the Supervisors' reports disclosing a fearful state of corruption and misery, the Directors at home decided to take the whole affair into their own hands, dispensing with all native intervention. Unaware that they were thus destroying the whole political structure of India, and causing a graver revolution than any invaders of the country were ever answerable for, they announced their decision, and desired their agents in Bengal to carry it out. The council at Calcutta, of which Mr. Hastings was then the most active member, undertook the business, set aside old modes of letting lands and levying revenue, deter-

mined in three days what new one would answer best, and converted their Supervisors into Collectors, with power which enabled them to do what the Directors complained of so bitterly in the spring of 1773. Their offices were now as much political as commercial; and the institution of the new scheme may be regarded as the half-way station between the commercial objects with which the Company entered the country, and the time (in 1834) when their commercial function had dissolved under the action of free-trade principles, and they remained a body with purely territorial functions and attributes.

The Governor-General was not at once the potential personage he has since become. The necessity of ruling by a Dictator (a dictator on the spot, though responsible to superiors at home) had not yet become obvious: and the Governor-General had no superiority in council, except the casting vote in case of an equal division. Whether he could govern or not depended chiefly on whether he had a party of two in the council. Two out of the four, with his own casting vote, were enough; and without it, he was not really governor. This is not the place in which to follow the history of the first general council and its factions, apart from the consequences to British interests. It must suffice to say that at the outset, three out of four of the council (and those the new officials from England) were opposed to Hastings.

It has been related that the internal administration of Bengal under Clive's "double system" was managed by the Nabob's prime-minister. This functionary had a salary of 100,000*l.* a year, and enjoyed a high dignity and immense power. One man who aspired to hold the office in Clive's time was the great Hindoo, Nuncomar, already described as eminent in English eyes for his wealth and his abilities, and much more in native estimation for his sanctity as a Brahmin, and his almost unbounded social power. He seems to have been a sort of Wolsey, if we can imagine Wolsey waiting for office at the pleasure of a foreign authority. In one way he was more exalted than Wolsey; his life was regarded as absolutely sacred, as a Brahmin: whereas nobody's life was secure near Henry VIII. The Maharajah Nuncomar was a great scoundrel—there is no doubt of that; and his intrigues, supported by forgeries, were so flagrant as to prevent his appointment to the premiership under the Nabob. Such vices were less odious in Bengal than almost anywhere else; but they were inconvenient, as well as disgusting, to the British; and this was the reason, why Clive set aside Nuncomar, and appointed his rival competitor, Mohammed Reza Khan, though he was highly reluctant to place the highest office in Bengal in the hands of a Mussulman. This Mussulman administered affairs for seven years before Hastings;

became Governor-General; and he also had the charge of the infant Nabob, after Surajah Dowla died. We have seen how dissatisfied the Directors were with the proceeds of their Bengal dominions. Nuncomar planted his agents everywhere; and in London especially; and these agents persuaded the Directors that Mohammed Reza Khan was to blame for their difficulties and their scanty revenues. Confident in this information, they sent secret orders to Hastings to arrest the great Mussulman, and everybody who belonged to him, and to hear what Nuncomar had to say against him. A similar disgrace was to be inflicted on the minister who held the same office in Bahar, Shitab-Roy, a brave man, devoted to the British. He was arrested at Patna when the greater Bengal minister was seized at Moorshedabad. Hastings announced this act of obedience in a letter to the Directors, dated Sept. 1, 1772, and informed his employers that he had kept the matter so secret that the members of the Council knew nothing of it till the accused ministers were on the road to Calcutta. While they were still in confinement the old system was swept away, and their offices with it. The young Nabob was committed to the charge of one of his father's wives, and his income was diminished one half. When the new system was fairly established, the two ministers were released. Shitab-Roy received an apology, and

all possible consideration; but he was already broken-hearted, and he presently died. The great Mussulman did not come out altogether so well from the trial, as Nuncomar had no scruples as to what he alleged, and how he supported it; but the Mussulman minister was not punished, and Nuncomar hated Hastings accordingly. He bided his time, storing up materials of accusation with which to overwhelm the Governor at the first turn of his fortunes. That turn was when the majority of the Council were opposed to the Governor-General, and rendered him helpless in his office; and Nuncomar then presented himself, with offers of evidence to prove all manner of treasons and corruptions against Hastings. Hastings was haughty; the councils were tempestuous. Hastings prepared to resign, though he was aware that the opinion of the English in Bengal was with him; and Nuncomar was the greatest native in the country, visited by the Council, and resorted to by all his countrymen who ventured to approach him. Foiled in the Council, Hastings had recourse to the Supreme Court. He caused Nuncomar to be arrested on a charge brought ostensibly by a native of having forged a bond six years before. After a long trial for an offence which appeared very slight to Bengalee natives in those days, the culprit was found guilty by a jury of Englishmen, and condemned to death;

by the judges. Monstrous as was the idea, in native minds, of hanging any man for so common an act as forgery—(much like lying with us)—it was more than monstrous—it was incredible that a Brahmin should be executed. Though he knew this, Hastings did not encourage the Chief Justice to use his power of respiting offenders pending a reference home. The Council declared that Nuncomar should be rescued at the last moment, if no other means remained. The British, many of whom had paid homage to Nuncomar in his greatness, were earnest to have him respited. The natives rejoiced or sorrowed, according as they were Mussulmans or Hindoos; but none of them appeared to have conceived that the great and sacred Brahmin would be really put to death. He was put to death, however, and by hanging. The people acted as if the final curse of Heaven had fallen upon them; and their frantic horror must have moved even the stern soul of Hastings. He was not a philosopher, nor a statesman “looking before and after,” and therefore he perhaps failed to be aware on that portentous day that he had caused a bottomless gulf to yawn between the Hindoos and the Anglo-Indians, and that he would himself have to meet, on this side the grave, a day of retribution for this deed. The execution took place on the 5th of August, 1776. Mohammed Reza Khan was restored to that part of his former

office which gave him the charge of the young Nabob and of the royal household at Moorshedabad.

Another of the guilty deeds by which Hastings compromised our national character while his ability was extending our power, was as audacious as the sacrifice of Nuncomar, and, at the same time, as sordid as any theft. The Mogul sovereign, Shah Alum, sunk in weakness and ignominy, lived at Allahabad, while his deputy, an able Rohilla chief, managed affairs at Delhi. The Rohillas were the warrior gentlemen of the Mussulman body in India, imported from beyond the north-western mountains, ranking high among the Affghan troops settled in India, and peaceably established as landholders in the plains extending from within seventy miles of the city of Delhi to the spurs of the Himalaya. While the Rohilla chief lived to administer affairs at Delhi, the nominal Emperor subsisted on the tribute (nearly 300,000*l.* a year) paid him by the English for the Bengal provinces. He was restless in his palace at Allahabad, and ever on the watch for the means of returning to Delhi, though perhaps with some apprehension as to what might become of the districts of Allahabad and Corah (made over to him by the Company) if he shifted his quarters. In 1770 the Rohilla deputy at Delhi died; and the Emperor then resolved to do what he had long meditated—he called in the Mahrattas to help him to his throne. They were abundantly ready to

gratify him: and, as soon as he was sufficiently involved to be unable to retract, and helpless in his camp in the midst of the rains, their chiefs offered him ruinous terms as the price of their assistance. On the 25th of December, 1772, he re-entered his capital, carrying himself as if he were really a great Mogul sovereign, while feeling himself the victim of the Mahrattas on the one hand and the English on the other; and exactly a twelvemonth later, he opened the gates of Delhi to the Mahrattas, in their character of besiegers, pressing him for the fulfilment of their hard terms. As for the English—Hastings made the discovery that it was absurd to keep faith with a nominal sovereign who was the tool of other people, as the Emperor now was of the Mahrattas; and he therefore gave notice that the annual tribute would not be paid again, and that the concession of the districts of Allahabad and Corah was revoked. These districts were so placed as to be more costly than profitable to the Company; whereas they lay conveniently to hand for the Viceroy of Oude—vassals of the Emperor. The Oude Nabob, Sujahood-Dowla, desired the lands: Hastings wanted money; and the parties struck a bargain. The Nabob purchased the districts for about half a million sterling. As for the Mahratta auxiliaries, they carried the Emperor and his forces northward with them, and seized first the lands of the late deputy, who had served his master so long and so faithfully.

The bravest efforts of the Rohillas failed to save their high-lying, unfenced, and rich plains from being laid waste; but their ruin was accomplished by Hastings, in his eager desire for money. He had already sold to Oude lands stolen from the Emperor: he now sold to Oude, in a different form, the brave and unoffending Rohillas. Sujah Dowla dared not encounter them unless reinforced by the best troops obtainable. The English troops (including their native regiments) were the best; and they were found obtainable. Hastings negotiated a loan of the British army, and received in consideration of its services, 400,000*l.*, clear of all expenses. Hastings himself put this transaction on record in a report to his council. He met the Oude Nabob at Benares in September, 1773; he “encouraged” the Nabob’s desire to acquire the Rohilla country, bearing in mind the distresses of the Company, and the importunity of the Directors for money. By the arrangement then and there entered into, the military expenses of the Company would be reduced nearly one-third; “the forty lakhs would afford an ample supply to our treasury: the Viceroy would be freed from a troublesome neighbourhood, and his dominions be much more defensible.” The considerations which were not referred to were—why a peaceable and honourable people should be invaded, and what England would say to having her name mixed up in such a business, for mere money, and her troops

sold to a rich bidder, to do such thief's work as this. What England thought of it, Hastings had the opportunity of seeing when, thirteen years later, he heard his act arraigned by Burke in the Commons, as the ground of an impeachment; and, again, fifteen years after the Benares *tête-à-tête*, when the *élite* of the British nation, assembled at Westminster, listened to his impeachment for various crimes and misdemeanours, of which the foremost, as the most flagrant, was the Rohilla war. The Directors expressed the strongest displeasure at this, and at other deeds of Hastings; but he noticed their remonstrances in his own way—by a sneer; saying that they should not press him so urgently for remittances if they were so hard to please as to his methods of raising money.

When the majority in Council shifted to his side, by accidents of death and other change, he extended his views, stiffened his will against all obstacles, and resolved to set his heel on the neck of his adversaries, while making the English power paramount throughout India. He was still embarrassed with financial difficulties; and his success in raising money from Oude tempted him to look round for some other rich potentate who might relieve his wants. There was no richer city then than Benares, the holy city, crammed with the gifts of devotees, and made the depôt of the commerce of the Ganges. The Hindoo princes of Benares had been vassals of Delhi and

Oude, and now stood in the same relation to the Company. Hastings demanded, for three successive years, 50,000*l.* in addition to the customary tribute. Cheyte Sing, the Benares prince, offered him 20,000*l.* for himself if he would remit the demand. Hastings took the money, and long kept the secret of his having it, though he finally declared that he never meant to appropriate it. However that may be, he did not remit the demand, but raised it to 60,000*l.* as a fine for delay, and exacted it by marching troops to receive it. The money was paid, and then a body of cavalry was demanded. Hastings avowed his policy towards Cheyte Sing—to increase his demands till the prince turned restive, and then to make him pay high for pardon. Cheyte Sing offered 200,000*l.* to be received into favour; but was told that it was not enough, and that the Governor-General was coming to Benares. Hastings was meditating selling Benares by a third bargain with the Oude Nabob. At Benares he arrested the prince, and was in consequence barely saved from ending his career in the midst of one of its basest acts. His officers were killed by the enraged populace of the Brahminical city; and the whole country rose, for many miles round, at the first news of a check to the English. The prince had escaped to the opposite river bank, and was preparing to dictate terms to his oppressor, when the British troops came up, summoned by messages which Hastings

had managed to send through the enemy. The British troops conquered; Benares was annexed to the English territory. The prince fled; one of his family was made Rajah of Benares, but without power, or other wealth than his pension from the Company. The Company received nothing from the far-famed treasury of Benares. It contained only a quarter of a million, and it went to the troops as prize-money. The territory, however, yielded a revenue of 200,000*l.* a year. His treatment of Cheyte Sing formed the second article of Hastings' impeachment.

An equally bad case was his pillage of the Princesses, or Begums, of Oude. A young Nabob now ruled there. He extorted money from his wealthy mother so outrageously that she appealed to the English for protection. Hastings believed that she and the other ladies of the family were worth 3,000,000*l.* in treasure, besides palaces and other wealth. He conspired with the profligate son to charge the ladies with having instigated disturbance at the time of the Benares conflict, and to take their wealth as a fine. They were imprisoned, insulted, and subjected to hardship, and their trusted officers were tortured. Hastings extorted 1,200,000*l.* from them, and justified himself for this, as for the other deeds just related, on the ground that the people of India could be managed only by force or fraud; that it was his business to do the best he could for the

interests of the Company, and that he must be the best judge of the means. The Directors and the English Government remonstrated against his acts, and repeatedly endeavoured to remove him; but he was so stoutly and obstinately supported by the proprietary, that he set his enemies at defiance, and completed the revolutionary period of our history in India by ruling till 1785.

We shall see hereafter how British courts of law worked in a country where the morality of Western Europe and its safeguards of law must at first have been unintelligible, and afterwards unacceptable. We can now only indicate that the establishment of a Supreme Court at Calcutta was a sign and pledge of a settled organization, as the territorial arrangements of Hastings were of a permanent policy. He committed crimes, and inflicted misery, as unnecessarily (according to modern opinion) as wickedly. But, these crimes apart, he was a great benefactor to both countries by amalgamating them to a greater extent than any other man had done, or than any other could have done. He was the first Governor of India who could and did converse with any natives in their own tongue. He was the first who opened the potent and mild resources of intellectual sympathy, by cultivating and honouring Oriental literature, and interesting the best minds of Europe in the history of our native subjects in Hindostan. He made the way easier for future Governors, and

finished with his own strong hand the revolutionary period which perhaps no other could have brought to a close. It is impossible to esteem him, and it is impossible not to admire him. Without any appearance of a conscience, and with nearly as little indication of a heart, he had a most effective understanding, and deserved whatever praise can be commanded by vigorous and patient resolution, and a life of strenuous purposes carried out in unfaltering action. He could hardly have been a happy man at any time; but he was strong and collected enough to keep his foes at bay, and win a final victory over them in the form of an acquittal from charges for which he had in fact undergone a protracted punishment of disgrace and suspense. He won royal favour, and a good deal of popular admiration: was made a Privy Councillor and the idol of the street; and he died, Hastings of Daylesford. He would probably have confessed in some soft hour of sunset, under the old oaks, that he did not enjoy them so much after the heavy price he had paid for them as when, in his childhood, he dreamed of possessing them, without a thought of guilt to be risked in the acquisition of them.

CHAPTER X.

CLOSE OF THE FIRST EXPERIMENT OF GENERAL GOVERNMENT.

1785.

"This is true, that the wisdom of all these later times, in princes' affairs, is rather fine deliveries, and shiftings of dangers and mischiefs, when they are near, than solid and grounded courses to keep them aloof. But this is but to try masteries with fortune."—BACON.

At the close of so critical a period as that of the administration of the first Governor-General, and of such a ruler as Warren Hastings, it seems fitting to take stock, as it were, of our East India possessions, to ascertain the amount and condition of what we have acquired. For this purpose we must see what has been doing to the South. The Madras Presidency had, at the time, no mind to be overlooked on account of the vast and showy achievements of Clive and Hastings in Bengal; and the spread of our empire was in fact nearly as remarkable, in the way of influence, in the south of the peninsula as it was in extent in Hindostan Proper, while there was as little to be said for the moral quality of the conquest in the one case as in the other. The grand apparent

difference in the two cases is that in the north-eastern territory two men of eminent ability did everything by their own strong will and dexterous hands, so that the spectacle presented to the natives was that of a ready-witted, resolute, irresistible Power, doing what it pleased with their country; whereas at Madras there was no overbearing genius, acting and ruling in defiance of men and circumstances, but a set of men quarrelling among themselves, and, if by chance agreeing on any policy or method, pretty sure to reverse it on receiving orders from home. Their military quality was highly esteemed; and there was an incessant competition for their alliance; but, as long as the Directors and their agents were apt to be at variance about their most important proceedings, and the chief officials were seen to be changed almost as soon as any decided policy was instituted, the general impression throughout the Deccan inevitably was that the British in India were weak and fickle, like other people, though in a less degree than the native rulers.

It will be remembered that Clive's early achievements left us with a Nabob of Arcot on our hands. The only lands held by the Company were the district round Madras, and a maritime district, the Northern Circars, which the Delhi Sovereign granted to them in 1765, and about the revenues of which they had made arrangements with the Nizam, the great Viceroy of the Deccan. More than this was

necessary to sustain such a position as theirs—that of arbiters of the destinies and relations of the native rulers; and they therefore first arranged with their Nabob that they should undertake the military defence of the Carnatic—he paying the expenses. By this means they obtained possession of all the forts; and it was resolved that whenever the Nabob desired to get rid of the garrisons he was now thankful to borrow, his wish should be resisted. The country was thickly studded with forts, perched on hill-tops, commanding difficult passes among the hills, or protecting fertile plains; and every soldier that could be spared was in one or another of them.

The vicinity of the British was dreaded by one order of the people and liked by another. The wealthier classes felt themselves reduced to the level of the multitude wherever the British administered or controlled either military or financial affairs; whereas, the lower classes were less wretched in proportion to the stability ensured by the presence of the English. As for the administration of justice, the time had not yet arrived for the introduction of English law even into the British territory on the coast, where it was hereafter to create as much disgust and bewilderment as in Bengal. Meantime, as the Hindoos predominated over the Mohammedans so as to allow few traces of Mussulman rule in the south, it was left chiefly to the Brahmins to deal with offences. Their power of excommunication was so

much more effective than any penal arrangements which could be made by Mussulman or Christian, that, whatever might be professed, the whole business of social morals and manners remained in the old hands, wherever the British appeared, as it had done wherever Aurungzebe had penetrated. Thus time passed, native rulers now combining and now making war on each other; now inviting the dreaded Mahrattas, and now seeking alliances against them; and everybody, all round, using the Mahratta name as a bugbear to frighten everybody else. The English, all the while, were under constant embarrassment as to whom they should support and whom put down; and the Directors sometimes left them without guidance, and even without answers, when they requested orders; and then confirmed or reversed their work, as might happen. The Rajah of Tanjore was deposed to please the Nabob of Arcot; and then the Directors insisted on his being reinstated. Again, the English Government sent out naval commanders to whom the Directors gave authority over their naval force in India; and this caused a perpetual struggle about precedence in dignity, and authority in political affairs. When Government sent an envoy on a mission, he required the Company's officers to appear in his train; and they found it impossible to do so before the eyes of tribes and nations who had always regarded them as supreme. An occasional rebellion of the Council,

or a part of it, against a President, the recall of a popular Governor home, or the imprisonment of an unpopular one on the spot, went further than anything else probably to show the essential evils and insurmountable difficulties of a method of rule which had grown up in India out of the natural circumstances of the case. Groups of foreign traders had inevitably become a territorial and political power, apparently supreme, but soon seen to be subjects, liable to be overruled from home in matters of Indian concern. Another complication was added when the two earlier Presidencies were placed under that of Bengal, and all the local governments subordinated to a Governor-General and the decisions of a Supreme Court. Here was the Madras Governor subjected to the Governor-General; and he to the Directors; and the Directors (under certain agreements at critical seasons) to the King's Government. It was not to be expected that the watchful nabobs, far and near, and the restless Mahrattas, and the jealous French who remained in India, should be much impressed by the consistency and dignity of a method of rule so complicated, and so troubled in its working. General notices like these must suffice in regard to the state of the Madras Presidency up to the year 1778.

The French were so often found to be on good terms with the Company's enemies, and helping them in wars and revolutions, that it was determined by the English to expel them from India

on the first convenient opportunity. If we got an ally to enforce our demand that French troops should be dismissed from territory which we had leased to a small chief, our ally helped us with alacrity, but only to engage the French troops in his own service. French officers organized the soldiery of any doubtful power, and were found in the heart of hostile territories and councils. When news arrived, in July, 1778, of war between France and England, the English did not wait to hear confirmation of the rumour, but disembarrassed themselves of the French at once. The settlements on the Hooghly and the Bay of Bengal surrendered on summons, and Pondicherry fell in September. The garrison were gallant soldiers, and the British were a generous foe; and every circumstance of mitigation softened the bitter mortification of vacating the place in which the French had till now been, as it were, an opposite neighbour in India to the other great European power. The garrison marched out with the honours of war, and the Pondicherry regiment was allowed to carry its colours.

There remained one foot-hold of the French—a small place on the western coast, called Mahé, where they had a factory. The spirit of Hastings showed itself in the project of marching native troops, under their European officers, across the peninsula, to take this small place, at once driving out the French altogether, testing the dispositions of

there was severe embarrassment in the Council-chamber at Madras. Hyder Ali, the great ruler of Mysore, had just applied for assistance against the Mahrattas; and the question was what answer to give him. He appealed to a treaty of nine years' standing, by which the Madras Government was bound to alliance with him in defensive wars; but he had made the same appeal in the first year after the treaty, and had obtained nothing better than neutrality. The British were afraid to involve themselves with the Mahrattas by openly assisting Hyder, but they would do nothing against him. The same answer was given now, and bitterly did the English rue it. How came they to pledge themselves to such an alliance in mutual defence if they could not keep to it for a single year? Their excuse was that they could not help themselves, being at Hyder's mercy at the moment of negotiation. Hyder was a soldier of fortune, of the lowest birth—his great-grandfather having been a wandering dervish from the Punjaub, who begged through the country, in order to raise the means of founding a mosque in the dominions of the Nizam of the Deccan—a method by which he got money as well as reputation. His descendant Hyder grew up totally uneducated; but he was a born soldier and commander, and he lived to endanger the British empire in India more than any man, or even any hostile nation, from the hour when

they set foot in it till now. He was rendered irredeemably hard-hearted and vindictive by having been put to the torture in childhood with his brother, to extort payment for a pretended debt of their deceased father; and early humiliation aggravated his ambitious tendencies to passion. By serving his prince, the Rajah of Mysore, at a pinch, by his soldierly qualities, he obtained a military command; and having used his position for marauding purposes, he was able to make such an appearance in the field as secured further promotion. He raised a troop, and armed them from the proceeds of his plunder, and engaged French officers to drill and organise them. He engaged, also, an astute and servile Brahmin, who supplied the defects of his ignorance, and did the dirty work of his intrigues. Hyder became Commander-in-Chief of Mysore, and with the aid of his Brahmin, pillaged friend and foe by a diligent use of his authority, his force, and his opportunities. He swept off the cattle of every district he crossed, and sold them at advanced prices to their owners. The number of his wounded always appeared unaccountably large on the periodical occasions when the allowance for the wounded was to be drawn; the fact being, that he added hundreds of sound men to the body of claimants by bandaging their limbs and bodies in cloths dyed blood-colour. While he was in the field, his Brahmin was at court wheedling the weak Rajah with praises of the

Commander-in-Chief, and obtaining whatever Hyder chose to ask. When he felt himself strong enough, Hyder assumed the office of prime minister, and soon after pensioned off the Rajah, and seated himself on his throne. This took place in 1761, when Clive had just returned to England after the acquisition of Bengal, and young Warren Hastings was made a member of Council. It is hardly probable that either foresaw, when hearing of the accession of a new and warlike ruler of Mysore, that the bandit Hyder, who cut off noses and ears by hundreds in a day, and plundered every wealthy man he could hear of, would be, within ten years, not only the most embarrassing ally the English in India had ever had, but the enemy who would be very near driving them out of the country altogether.

As sovereign of Mysore, he first encroached on all his neighbours, so as to unite them all in an alliance against him; and next he took advantage of their fears to divide them, and make them fight his battles. In 1767, the Nizam, the great Prince of the Deccan, was warring against the British, instead of with them against Hyder. The English, afflicted by the weaknesses already described, had enough to do to meet the Nizam, when suddenly Hyder swept down the pass, and scoured the plains of the Carnatic, almost without drawing bridle for the last 120 miles, and appeared before Fort George, and among the residences of the English officials. The Madras Govern-

ment declared that there was no option about making a peace on the enemy's terms; and it was then and therefore that they agreed with Hyder to restore all conquests on both sides, and to aid one another against all attack from any quarter. The British treated their engagement as men too often treat "vows made in pain;" and they failed their ally in his next struggle with the Mahrattas. It suited his purposes to let them alone for the time, when he had beaten off his invaders; and he applied himself, between 1774 and 1778, in strengthening his empire. In 1778, the Mahrattas threatened him again; and again he applied to the British to fulfil their agreement.

Again they shrank from giving active help; and sorely they suffered for it. The French were smarting under the humiliation of their total dislodgment, and they stimulated the passions of Hyder, and offered their services in organising his forces. They set about their work diligently; and so did Hyder in another direction. He won over not only the Nizam, but his own enemy, the Mahrattas, to an alliance against the British. The British seem to have been misled by the impunity allowed them on the former occasion of receding from their engagements; for it does not appear that they were at all prepared for the consequences of their present faithlessness, and of his wrath at their taking Mahé, after a warning from him that he considered that place in some sort

a dependency of his own, and that if it was meddled with he would invade the Carnatic. At one time the council wrote to Calcutta that affairs looked threatening; and then they informed the Directors that their prospects were pacific. They did so in January, 1780, and again in February; while, so late as the following June, no measures of defence were taken. Then, they bethought themselves of moving a detachment of soldiers across the Kistna, to be within call. It was on the 19th of June that news arrived of the assemblage of a large army under French officers at Bangalore, and of the march of Hyder from Seringapatam. Before the end of the month it was known at all the Presidencies that Hyder's army had been supplied with stores in abundance from the French islands, and that the force fell little short of 100,000 men. Then ensued that invasion of the Carnatic which is as celebrated an event as any in the history of India. The mighty host poured down from the breezy table-land of Mysore upon the hot plains of the Carnatic through the passes, and especially through that one which Sir James Mackintosh found so safe for the solitary traveller seven-and-thirty years later—as wild with rock and jungle in the one case as the other, but witnessing within one generation the modes of life which are usually seen five centuries apart. Mysore was rising under Hyder to the stage of improvement which a vigorous Mohammedan ruler can induce

upon an exhausted Hindoo state; but, under British superintendence, the best policy of Hyder had been left far behind for many years when the Recorder of Bombay made his philosophical observations on the security of life, property, and industry, on the very road by which Hyder descended to lay waste the Carnatic.

The Carnatic was indeed laid waste. Our garrisons yielded, for the most part; and the war, and its consequences of famine and disease, so depopulated the country, that, after peace was made, not one human being, nor one head of cattle, was met in a journey of hundreds of miles. The villages were burned, far on each side of the invaders' path; and Madras was so closely pressed that there was no other prospect than of yielding ultimately from famine. The British force was divided and overthrown in detail; and there appeared to be no means of meeting the great French force expected on the coast. The peasantry told Hyder everything, and the British commanders nothing; and it was the utmost that the English could do to hold their ground in a few fortified posts, without venturing upon offensive operations. Then it was that Hastings made his second memorable venture with his Bengal Sepoys. He sent down five regiments 1,100 miles along the coast to Madras, venturing to oppose them to French troops, and having cause to be proud of his venture. They returned at the end of four years

to Bengal, just before Hastings laid down his authority. He reviewed them, rewarding them with language which fired the hearts of a generation of future soldiers. As he rode along, in his civilian blue coat, and with uncovered head, every countenance of that array of black Rajpoots (for they were chiefly of that race) blazed with pride and delight; and the way in which those Sepoys were assured that they had mainly saved the southern Presidency is a tradition all over India to this day. Sir Eyre Coote, the idol of the native troops, was sent to conduct the war; and, by their attachment, rendering available his failing powers, and by the vigour of the Governor-General's absolutism over the feebleness of the Madras authorities, our empire was saved. At Porto Novo, near the old Fort St. David, which Clive knew so well, the British force was in a desperate position on the 1st of July, 1781—with the deafening surf parting them from their ships on the right hand, and Hyder's host in possession of all the sand-hills round, and of both roads in front. The occasion kindled a valour like that of Crécy; and the handful of hungry British put to flight the well-found host of the enemy, as a family of wolves scatter a herd of sheep. If the English had had cavalry, they would have destroyed Hyder's force; as it was, they dispersed it, and obtained a rich booty, with a loss of only 400 men. Still, hunger pressed throughout the province, and most where it was necessary to concentrate the force.

It was no use to propose negotiation. Hyder's reply to all such overtures was that there was no negotiating with authorities who went home every two years or so, being succeeded by men who disclaimed the pledges of their predecessors. The whole affair seemed to be drawing towards the dreaded close of a surrender through famine when Hyder died before Madras. His son Tippoo was as well disposed a successor as he could have desired, though not as vigorous; but, between the shock to his army of their old leader's death, the necessity of going home to establish his authority there, and the danger of invasion on the west by a force from Bombay, Tippoo found it necessary to withdraw from the Carnatic. Hyder died in Nov., 1782; Tippoo withdrew homewards in 1783; and made peace in the spring of 1784. The basis of the treaty, after so much mischief had been done, was, as before, a mutual restitution of conquests. The next year closed the reign of the first Governor-General; and our possessions in India then stood thus. A reference to the map will show the proportion our acquisitions in 1785 bore to our dominion now. When Clive and Hastings were said, in their own time, to have given us an Indian empire, the extent of our territory was a matter of wonder and conscientious misgiving; but the great fact of the case was the establishment of a policy under which the territory, and its advantages of every kind, must grow and increase. The possessions which

Hastings left to his successor were; the whole of Bengal, with its appendages of Orissa and Bahar; and the territory of Benares, the Northern Circars, lying along the Bay of Bengal, the Guntoor Circar, separately acquired in 1778; the estate of the Company near Madras, consisting of five miles along the coast; and Nagore, acquired from the Tanjore Rajah. On the western coast, the island of Salsette had been ceded to us by the Mahrattas. The Carnatic was, in fact, our own, being held under our control by a Nabob who was a mere creature of the Company. At the close of a period so remarkable as the administration of Warren Hastings, and in prospect of further conflicts in the Deccan, a new provision of government was made, of the highest importance in the history of our empire in India. That empire was thenceforward to be ruled under the combined authority of the British Government and the East India Company.

CHAPTER XI.

BEGINNING OF THE DOUBLE GOVERNMENT.

1784—1799.

"'Tis not easy for the distant parts of a large State to combine in any plan of free government; but they easily conspire in the esteem and reverence for a single person."—HUME.

"How shall the enemy of the bride speak well of the wedding?"
Proverb.

WITHOUT departing from the plan of these chapters—that of describing the British in India, and not the fluctuations of Indian questions in Britain—it is necessary to glance homewards occasionally at those marked periods when the legislature provided for great changes to be wrought in the management of our new dependency. The last of those great changes was the institution of a Supreme Government and Judicature in 1774. The plan did not work very well, and it failed to supply some needs; so that before the first Governor-General resigned his office it was clear that further considerable changes must be made—and especially at the source of authority—in the very constitution of the governing power of India. The outcry against Hastings, which was soon to cause his impeachment, was already very loud, and the Ministry and the

India-house together could not prevail against the determination to support him on the part of the proprietors. Other causes of discontent, financial, political and moral, have been referred to before, and we can only glance at the most serious of all—the ill-success of the introduction of English law, and the establishment of the Supreme Court in Bengal. No sufficient care had been used to define the powers and duties of the executive government, on the one hand, and the judiciary on the other; and incessant strifes between the two caused a rivalry in the oppression of the natives which must be put an end to, one way or another. English law proceedings are not very delightful to us at home, among whom, and to suit whom, the whole body of British law has grown up. It could not possibly suit any other country but one inhabited by our own race; and there is no Asiatic people to whom it could be rendered intelligible, applicable, or endurable, without a training of such duration as need not be contemplated here. Every custom, feeling and prejudice of the natives was outraged by our system of oaths, examinations, scale of offences, trials, and punishments. Never, perhaps, was a man more extensively or bitterly hated than the first Chief Justice—Sir Elijah Impey, whose merits and demerits are still a matter of controversy, but who would have fared little better in such a post if he had been a just man made perfect. The confusion

and popular wretchedness in Bengal under the new system were so terrible, and the Company at home were so disappointed, and so unable to keep on good terms with the Government, that something must evidently be done; and the British people were roused to a stronger interest than the present generation has ever been seen to take in Indian politics.

In 1783, Lord North and Mr. Fox were administering affairs at home, and Hastings was intriguing in Bengal with the Nabob of Oude, with whom his famous interview was to take place in a few months. Mr. Fox proposed his scheme for the better government of India, not at all anticipating the hubbub it would occasion, nor dreaming that it would throw out the Coalition Ministry. Never before had the nation been so excited about Indian affairs, though the main objection made to the bill was founded on purely British considerations. The King was angry and alarmed to excess; and the Commons, with their considerable majority, were obliged to give way before the hostility of the Lords to the measure. These circumstances are referred to here because the impression they produced on young minds largely affected the subsequent fortunes of our Indian empire. Among the eager listeners to the debates, which were repeatedly carried on till four or five in the morning, was the young Irish peer Lord Wellesley, who had won reputation as a scholar and a poet, and who had lately taken his seat, and his place among Grattan's

party in the Irish House of Lords. He was soon to become intimate with Pitt, and in a few years more to establish a theory and practice of government in India, for which the discussions of 1783 and 1784 went some way to prepare him. We hardly need add that he had a young brother, Arthur, who was likewise to have something to do with India. He was now a boy of fifteen, fond of play, and showing a countenance so undeveloped that then, and for long after, it was said by casual observers that whatever his accomplished brother Richard might do, nothing would ever come out of Arthur. He, too, heard at school something of the uproar about Fox's India Bill, though without any suspicion how nearly the matter might concern him. Young John Malcolm, born in the same month, had already chosen India for his destination, and had just landed at Madras, and gone to the seat of war in front of Tippoo's force. Munro was in the field there, an ensign of four-and-twenty, interested in learning how the presidency was to be legislated for, of which he was to be an eminent governor. There was a French prisoner in camp about that time who probably cared little enough about how our legislature dealt with India, but who was afterwards so far interested as every European monarch must be in the management of such a dependency of any empire. A young sergeant, whose name was Bernadotte, was taken in a night attack on the British camp, and detained till the

peace in 1784. These were of the generation which connects us with that charged with the first establishment of a polity in India.

Fox's bills were thrown out, and Pitt's rival measures became law in 1784; and there was another "double government" to be discussed as the leading feature of our Indian rule. Clive's "double government" consisted of the face and its mask; Pitt's "double government" consisted of a dual brain with its pertaining pair of hands. Under Clive, the British ruled absolutely, while fulfilling the forms of vassalage to the Mogul court. Under the system of 1784, the Company and the administration prepared by consultation and a regulated co-operation or method of concession at home, for carrying on an absolute government in India. Clive's method was merely provisional, and expired when Hastings transferred the administration of Bengal from Moorshedabad to Calcutta, on the imprisonment of the native ministers. The Double Government provided in 1784 by the legislature is in operation at this day. The two methods have nothing in common but the name; but their having the same name renders this short explanation desirable.

The Company's home government consisted before of the two courts—first of Directors, and second of Proprietors. To these was now added a third body, whose office was described in part by its title—

the Board of Control—a body consisting at first of Privy Councillors, nominated by the King, to the number of six, and of the Secretaries of State and Chancellor of the Exchequer, in virtue of their office. The limitation to the Privy Council for a choice of members was removed nine years later. The President transacts the business on ordinary occasions; and his business is to superintend the political and territorial transactions of the Company (who were then less a political than a commercial body), to overlook all the correspondence on those subjects, and, if necessary, to overrule the proceedings of the Directors. As a compensation for this, the Court of Proprietors could not interfere when the Government and the Directors were agreed. The salaries and other expenses of the Board of Control were to be paid by the Company.

Such is the famous Double Government of India which all the civilized world criticises, and which stands as an anomaly in political history. Without defending it in a theoretical view, Englishmen may fairly ask men of other nations (whether republicans or subjects of a despotism) what better arrangement could have been made, under circumstances wholly unprecedented? A set of merchants found themselves involved accidentally (as may be said) in war and politics, and compelled to exercise military and political sway, while they were themselves

subjects of a remote monarchy which had no connection with India except through them. It was not the case of a colony and its mother-country; for India has never yet been colonized. It was the case of an aggregate of States, poor and misgoverned, and in such a condition of anarchy that the commercial Company was not so much tempted as compelled to overrule by its power of civilization the terrorism and corruption of native rivals and tyrants. The struggle was deepened and dignified by the intrusion of our European rivals, the French, upon the scene; and a decisive character was given to the whole by the accident of two men of eminent ability starting up in the most critical times, each in his place. Clive and Hastings bequeathed to the Company functions and liabilities which had never been contemplated or desired, and to which its members must, except by miracle, be inadequate. They must be aided by Government; bickerings must arise out of the mutual jealousies of bodies so connected; and when the political and territorial business of the Company began to outgrow the mercantile, so that the honour and the foreign relations of England became implicated with the procedure of the Company, it was necessary to impose more or less of Government control as a set-off against support and assistance afforded to a body which must otherwise have been overwhelmed by its responsibilities.

So much for the origin of the “double government”—a creation not only natural, but inevitable. Its probable working was and is quite another question. It was said from the beginning that the rule of officials who were subjects at home while sovereigns abroad could never succeed; that while the natives supposed them sovereigns, the interference of the Board of Control could only paralyse their actions; whereas, if the natives discovered them to be subjects, controlled even in India by a higher power, their authority would perish at once; and that, if there was any escape from this liability, it could only be by the subservience of the one board to the other. If the Directors were subjugated to the Board of Control, it would be better for all parties that the Company should be dissolved, and India be made a colony. If the Company could resist and nullify the dictation of the Government (which everybody knew to be impossible under the adversity of that time) the new institution would be simply an expensive sham. If neither could subjugate the other, they would be always quarrelling; and, as one consequence, India would be misgoverned. Such were the forebodings in 1784, when Pitt’s India Bill became law; and it cannot be denied that both countries have had a taste of all the prophesied evils in turn, while yet the government of India remains one of the finest specimens—all the difficulties considered—of human government that the world has seen.

Nothing is easier than to find fault with the government of India; and it is certain that a multitude of errors have been committed, the results of which will long embarrass us; but if the singularity of the case be duly considered, its vastness, its prodigious embarrassments, and the necessarily empirical character of the methods to be employed, it may be doubted, even in this our hour of calamity, whether better success could have been obtained by our merely human understanding in our age of the world. As to the beneficent operation of our rule on the fortunes of a hundred millions of natives there can be no question. The doubt is, not of the blessing of our rule to the natives, but whether it might not have been greater to ourselves—a question with which we are not concerned in this place. After taking a survey of India, in his calm philosophical way, and from his excellent point of view at Bombay, Sir James Mackintosh spoke of the country, a dozen years after the institution of the Board of Control, as “our ill-gotten but well-governed Asiatic empire.” We have since deteriorated in some respects, and improved in others; and, on the whole, we believe the description remains true.

The same authority, under the same circumstances, declared his belief that the revolutionary period of our rule had closed with Hastings, and that Lord Cornwallis’s just and moderate principles and temper would stand the country in as good stead as the

ability of Hastings. This experiment was instituted in 1786, when Lord Cornwallis became the second Governor-General. He held the office seven years, during which events of eminent importance took place in the Deccan. He went out furnished with elaborate instructions from the combined authority of the Board of Control and the Company; and his rule was signalised by two classes of operations, financial and judicial.

The Nabob of Arcot, or of the Carnatic, son of our first *protégé* there, had not only failed for a course of years in his engagements to the English, made in return for their defence of his country and his rule, but had become hateful to his own subjects by the oppression exercised in raising the revenue. Who got the money nobody could or would tell; but the Nabob was poor; he did not pay his tribute to the English, nor the wages of the soldiers whose good-will was all important to the British; and yet his subjects suffered as cruelly as if always under the screw of a rapacious government. As the Nabob could not, or would not, govern properly, the British repeatedly proposed to take the charge of his financial affairs into their own hands; and Lord Cornwallis effected the transfer of the management. Every impediment was thrown in the way by the reigning family; the decline of industry and its rewards had become almost irremediable before reform was attempted; and by 1792 it had

become so questionable whether new methods were not as bad as old tyranny, that fresh arrangements were made. In the first instance the Nabob had failed to pay his 360,000*l.* a year, and Lord Cornwallis undertook the levy, altering the conditions; and in 1792 the Nabob became again liable for the same amount, under penalty, in case of failure, of forfeiting certain districts; while, in case of war with Mysore, the whole Carnatic was to come under British management, the Nabob becoming a pensionary—a better lot for him than being the helpless victim of Tippecoo, as he must have been but for British protection. He was not qualified for a better destiny, and in 1801 yielded up the civil and military government of the Carnatic in exchange for one-fifth of the net revenue of his dominions, and the maintenance of his officers and court.

Out of these arrangements grew Lord Cornwallis's system of management of the land—well meant, but of questionable benefit to the people. In the other branch of his reforms, the judicial, the results were very discouraging. He received reports of the continuous increase of crime; and the obstinate attitude of the natives of India, who look and believe of all kinds and degrees of crime to be sanctioned by the introduction of the English law, and who will not be persuaded to accept the English law. Lord Cornwallis was not the man to effect a change.

lent and earnest-minded man, but he was not wont to succeed: and as he failed at Yorktown, and thus closed the American war, and changed a ministry at home; and as he finally succumbed to disease and death on the Ganges, at a critical moment, having undertaken a second term of rule in India when he was physically unequal to the charge; so he now, in the interval between those two failures, miscarried in his statesmanship, though he brought to his work personal qualities as venerable as his chivalrous courage when his army had to lay down their arms in Virginia, and his calm dignity when he was dying in the place which should have been occupied by the most vigorous man of the time. The imperious and corrupt rule of Hastings made everybody eager to put the mild and virtuous Cornwallis in his place; but, at the end of ten years, he would have been a bold man who would assert that the people were better and happier under the one than the other. There remains, however, the grand consideration of the influence of personal character, so potent in India. Hastings had the prestige of genius; Cornwallis of probity, and, for a time, of something approaching to wisdom. But, after all, his name is most favourably connected with military achievements, and the reduction of the power of Tippoo.

After the peace in 1784, the dominions of Tippoo consisted of the high table-land in Mysore, extending

500 miles by 350. This was the stronghold of the Mohammedan power in the south; and very strong it was, with its natural defences and its forts, and a Mussulman population almost as numerous as the Hindoos. Tippoo had the command of any number of French officers and engineers, and plenty of money to pay them with, his revenue amounting to 5,000,000*l.*, in addition to the accumulations left by his father. He was desperately hated by the English from the time when the late peace disclosed what his treachery and cruelties had been towards his prisoners of war; and when the "Tiger" (which is his name translated) proved that there could be no permanent peace or prosperity for us in the Deccan while he held his lofty seat, the British rejoiced to go out against him, as if it had been a real tiger hunt. Tippoo began to arm, and prepare for a struggle when he found, in 1790, that his name was not in the list of friendly powers recorded in the British treaty with the Nizam of the Deccan; and he felt his way by attacking the Rajah of Travancore, whom we were bound by treaty to assist in such a case. The Nizam joined forces with the English; but his junction was as embarrassing as it could be useful. There was a brave and skilful body of French officers to be broken up and dispersed from the service of the Nizam, while his own fidelity was always sufficiently questionable. The dispersion of the French corps was admirably managed, without

blood-hed or even ill-will; and the gorgeous array of the Nizam's forces, with their long train of followers, was a spectacle very animating to the young Englishmen who bore a part in the pageant—some of them little dreaming what fortunes were in store for them—one as directing and controlling the policy of the Deccan from a post at Hyderabad, and another breaking the power of the Mahrattas, and a third becoming the virtual sovereign of broad provinces. On they went, and one after another of Tippoo's fortresses fell into their hands, till Tippoo bethought himself of the way in which his father had distressed the English. He descended into the Carnatic, leaving the British behind him; and once more the Mysore cavalry appeared in the neighbourhood of Madras. This brought Lord Cornwallis himself into the field, and soon after the Mahrattas joined the league against the "Tiger." Each party had successes in different directions; but when the great fortress of Bangalore fell before the British, Tippoo demanded a truce. It was refused; and then his fortunes revived a little. He held off and held out till the spring of 1792, when General Abercromby coming up, and the allied host surrounding Seringapatam, no further resistance was possible. Tippoo yielded, and accepted humiliating terms. Yet he was not crushed. Half his dominions were left him, as if to give him power of future mischief. The other half he ceded to the allies, and above 3,000,000*l.* of

treasure, and all his prisoners, and two of his sons as hostages. Men are now living who remember the interest excited by those boy princes, ten and eight years old, and the admiration called forth by Lord Cornwallis's treatment of them. Tippoo himself was deeply impressed by it. Yet was he as treacherous and vindictive as ever, while moved by the British fidelity and magnanimity. He instantly began to agitate among the princes of India against us, and sent a secret embassy to the French islands. It took years to disclose the extent of his intrigues and the depth of his hypocrisy. He could claim no sympathy, and little compassion; for he was the first aggressor, and was never ungenerously treated. He was not of any ancient race of princes, but the son of a free-booter; and he was altogether responsible for his own adversity. It was not Lord Cornwallis who disposed of him at last; for the Governor-Generalship changed hands in 1793. He returned home, and was succeeded by Sir John Shore, afterwards Lord Teignmouth, who in 1798 yielded his government to Lord Wellesley (then Lord Mornington). One of the first things Lord Wellesley heard in India was that 10,000 French and 30,000 negro troops were expected in Mysore from the Mauritius. No time was to be lost. The French were carrying all before them in Egypt, and Mysore was now to be the portal through which they meant to march into India. In February, 1799, the invasion of Mysore was ordered; the allies opened

their fire against Tippoo early in March; and on the 4th of May they were in possession of Seringapatam. On the former occasion, when the troops were baulked of their plunder there, Lord Cornwallis and General Abercromby gave up to them their own share while awarding them six month's batta, in consideration of their excellent conduct. Their time was now come. Tippoo's troops fled from the breach the British were entering. He was wounded, but obstinately refused to make himself known, and was shot by an English soldier whom, in self-defence, he had wounded in the knee. He was honoured with a solemn funeral the next day; and he has been since idolised among his Mussulman subjects as a martyr to their faith. He was increasingly oppressive to his people, however, and no claims to moral respect can be advanced on his behalf. He was as remarkably fond of letters as his father was illiterate; and at the India House a portion of that library may be seen with which he was wont to delight himself for many hours of the day. The British were now rid of their greatest enemies. Hyder's age was not known; but he was above eighty when he died. Tippoo was forty-nine.

General Harris commanded the British at the storming of Seringapatam, and some remarkable youths sat on the commission appointed to divide the conquered territory. "Boy Malcolm," as he was called, was the first secretary, and Thomas Munro the second. The general in command was one of the

commissioners; and another was the British colonel who had commanded the Nizam's troops on the occasion—that young colonel bearing the name of Arthur Wellesley. The English territory now extended to the sea on the Malabar side, and on the south to Coimbatore and Tanjore. The revenue thus acquired was small—not more than half a million a year; but the British territory was rendered more defensible, and communications were established between the different portions. There was no reason for placing the family of the usurper on the throne of Mysore, while any of the hereditary sovereigns' descendants remained. One of the princes of that family was made Rajah under British protection; and the brilliant episode in the history of Mysore created by the great usurper and his son closed with the expiration of the eighteenth century.

CHAPTER XII.

BEGINNING OF A REVENUE SYSTEM.

1793.

“Tell me, Sir,
Have you cast up your state, rated your lands,
And find it able to endure the change?”

Two Noble Gentlemen.

“What are these?”

“The tenants.”—BEAUMONT and FLETCHER.

It is very interesting to follow the fortunes of the British in India, as their dominion extended by war and diplomacy; and especially when they were forced into war by the aggressions of their neighbours—as in the instance of the Mysore usurpers, Hyder and Tippoo; but our real position and contemporary prospects cannot be understood without some observation of the measures introduced by Lord Cornwallis as reforms in the internal administration of the country. Those measures have affected the destinies of the native inhabitants to an incalculable extent; and they have been the subject of controversy among statesmen and economists from their first promulgation to this day. No picture of the English in India can therefore be faithful in which

features of so much importance are not sketched, however meagrely.

Horace Walpole said of Lord Cornwallis that he was "as cool as Conway, and as brave; he was indifferent to everything but being in the right; he held fame cheap, and smiled at reproach." This noble eulogium indicates the faults as well as the virtues of the statesman; for a man of such qualities could hardly have any other faults than those which were the shady side of his virtues. So it was, as every part of his eventful life proved, and especially the seven years of his rule in India. He went out with fixed ideas as to the principles and characteristics of a paternal government; and he proceeded to institute from Calcutta a system founded on those ideas. There was another great and humane man at Madras, equally devoted to the work of good government; and his aspirations took form in a scheme the exact opposite of that of Lord Cornwallis. The subsequent controversy has related to the rival schemes of Lord Cornwallis and Sir Thomas Munro. We must look at the outlines of both, as both were tried in different districts.

The revenue of the Company at that time was derived from the land to the extent of more than two-thirds, the monopolies of salt and opium supplying two-thirds of the remainder. The land tenures, and the method of drawing revenue from them, were, therefore, the first object of interest and care to a

good government. Lord Cornwallis believed that nothing could well be worse than the condition of the whole agricultural population, as he and his predecessors found it, and that his duty clearly was to remodel the whole system on incontrovertible principles. He held that a steady emanation of capital from land would sustain, and was the only means of sustaining, an upper class, by which the mass would ultimately be raised in their intellectual and material condition; that such capital would create commerce; that such commerce would create knowledge and enlightenment; and that thus the ends of good government would ultimately be answered. It should be added, in justice to him and to Sir Thomas Munro, that both anticipated with entire confidence the speedy colonisation of India as the consequence of the free trade which they supposed to be near at hand. Every assumption of new political and territorial power by the Company was, in their eyes, an outgrowing of the original commercial function, which must soon, as they calculated, be vacated altogether. The failure of that calculation explains a part of such ill-success as attended both schemes. Lord Cornwallis arrived from England full of the constitutional supposition that an industrial people had their lot in their own hands, when once they were furnished with good laws and methods. He was so far from perceiving that clear and abundant knowledge of the people to be legislated for was

requisite, that he and his helpers volunteered an explanation that they knew very little of the residents and their ways and notions, adding that the knowledge would come in time, and give the means of working the new system more and more effectually. The good-natured conceit of this notion is so like that which at once institutes and damages most philanthropic experiments, that there is no need to enlarge upon it: nor need it be added that Lord Cornwallis's view of our duty to India was that we should Europeanize it as thoroughly and rapidly as possible. India was, from the earliest times discernible by us, studded over with villages, the land being divided into minute portions, which were jointly and severally, in each village, liable for the whole rent and taxes. However long such a system might have lasted if it had been left to itself, it was thoroughly dislocated by the Mussulman intrusion. The tyranny which under Mogul rule crushed the peasantry, made the soil change hands; and in one place several holders depended on one portion, while in another several portions were in the hands of one man. Where the Mussulman had not penetrated there were complications quite as difficult to deal with. The original method seems to have everywhere sprung out of the primary necessity every community was under to defend itself against enemies, brute or human; and as it permitted no inequality of fortune, it was sure to give way in some point or another, and to lapse into

special customs quite as important in the people's eyes as any principles or laws whatever. All these facts and considerations were ignored by Lord Cornwallis in instituting his celebrated "permanent settlement."

He found ready-made to his hand a class called zemindars, who were so full of complaints, and so eager in their claims, that they formed a very prominent object in his view of Indian life. Many of these were Hindoo princes of very ancient families; and no small number boasted of having held their property since a long date before the Mogul conquest. It was natural for the British to regard the order as a sort of nobles, and for Lord Cornwallis to suppose that he had only to endow them with certain powers to obtain the upper class on which the future enlightenment and elevation of the country depended. Whereas in the parts of India which then concerned us (a limitation which must be borne in mind) the zemindars were the class responsible for the payment of the land revenue, and virtually, therefore, the masters of the cultivators and the land. The community of the villages was one of liability and not of possessions; and the zemindars were regarded practically as the landowners of society, when they were theoretically only the middlemen, whose function was to levy the revenue, and pay it over to the sovereign. This account of the zemindars should be accompanied by the warning that their precise character and function are still a matter of dispute between the

advocates of opposite systems, some considering them as genuine landowners, and others as mere officers of Government, making their own fortunes out of their office, and at the expense of the ryots or cultivators from whom they levied the revenue. What Lord Cornwallis proposed to do with them was this :

In 1793 he made proclamation of a definitive settlement of the land revenues in Bengal. The Government gave up all claim to an increased revenue in future. The zemindars were to be the proprietors of the soil, but under the restriction that they could not displace any ryot who paid the then existing amount of rent. The difference between what the zemindar received and what he paid to Government was supposed to be one-third ; and he had a further means of improving his fortunes in the waste lands, which were handed over to the class as a gift. These lands amounted to at least a third of the whole area. The method of equal division was imposed as the law of inheritance. All this might look well on paper on the Governor-General's desk ; but a multitude of difficulties rose up at the first hour of its enforcement. Zemindars and ryots could not agree about rent and other claims ; there were endless contradictions about ownership of lands : and as soon as there were courts ready to try causes arising under the new system, the amount and hopeless intricacy of the business might have dismayed any but the stoutest heart. Opinions vary still as to the

results of the method on the whole. Where it fails, some lay the blame on Lord Wellesley's passive reception of the policy, which he did not try to amend; and it is certain that the official successors of Lord Cornwallis were too full of their wars and their diplomacy to give proper attention to a scheme which involved the vital interests of nearly the whole population. Complaints abounded, certainly; but it may be true that these complaints were a sign of reviving life, as far preferable to the previous apathy of the ryot class as the screams of a resuscitated patient under the pains of a returning circulation are better than the insensibility of a drowning man under water. On the one hand, again, the rise in the value of land, soon apparent at sales, seemed to show that the plan worked well; while, on the other, it is alleged that such rise was not only capricious where the settlement extended, but that it exactly corresponded with the increased value of the nearest lands which were not subject to the "permanent settlement." It could hardly be alleged that the lot of the ryot was improved, while the landowner could find means of involving him in difficulty, and then turning him out, in order to make way for a tenant who would pay more. In six years from the first promulgation, a former power was restored to the zemindars, on their complaint that they could not obtain payment from the ryots, and on their showing that many of them had lost their ancient estates, and been ruined. They

gained their point partly by showing that the ruined zemindars gave place to a new set of landowners more oppressive than themselves. They were allowed, as of old, to eject the ryots; and then the ryots found themselves thrown into a worse purgatory than that from which they had been ostensibly rescued. It was under this *régime* that Rammohun Roy came over, and gave us his opinion, which was that the system worked well for the Company, well for the zemindars, and most wretchedly for the ryots. Bengal paid better than Madras, which was under the other system: but then, the North-West provinces, which were not under the settlement, paid as well as Bengal. The prosperity of the zemindars was owing not only to the legitimate resources of the waste lands, but to that exaction of increased rents which it was the main object of the whole scheme to preclude. As for the depressed millions, the testimony of Rammohun Roy was very striking. He said that one might take one's stand anywhere in the country, and find that within a circle of a hundred miles there was probably not one man, outside the landholding class, who was in independent circumstances, or even in possession of the comforts of life. No doubt matters have greatly improved in the quarter of a century that has elapsed since this testimony was recorded; but the existence of so low an average of welfare in 1830 proves that Lord Cornwallis's plan was not adapted for remedying the evils inherent in

the Asiatic social system—such as we found it. Lord Wellesley, however, had no misgivings about it, but extended it to conquered and ceded provinces, till it had a very wide area for the trial of its powers.

Sir Thomas Munro's scheme, called the Ryotwar system, had its trial and its failures too. It set out from premises the very opposite of those of Lord Cornwallis. Society in India, we were told, was successful, powerful, civilized, orderly, and refined, clothed in bright shawls and fine muslins, while the Britons wore hides and painted themselves for battle; and the inhabitants of such a country, descendants of such ancestors, must know better than any upstart strangers what social methods were most suitable to their constitution and environment. The object should therefore be to make Indian society as intensely Asiatic as possible. It was not suggested that, for such an aim, the legislating and executive authority ought to be Asiatic too; but the absurdity and peril of subjecting fifty millions of people to the ideas of European closet-statesmen, who admitted their own ignorance of native history, was emphatically exhibited by the advocates of the Ryotwar system. On their part, however, they fell into the mistake of imposing a truly Asiatic repression on the industrial classes. Sir Thomas Munro swept away all intervention between the Government and the taxpayer. He demolished the intermediate function of the zemindars altogether. Every ryot was to have

his field surveyed and assessed; a deduction for errors was to be made in each group of assessments, and then he was to pay the annual rent direct to the State; that rent being fixed for ever at the amount first settled. The waste land, after being surveyed and classed, was to be taken in hand by the ryots at their own pleasure; and they were at liberty to give up any portions of their lands, after the assessment had once determined the value. This looked well at first, like the scheme it was intended to supersede; and the more because Munro proposed the most liberal terms that could be offered to the ryots. But the working was immediately encompassed with difficulties. Alarmed zemindars showed that certain fields had paid rent to their fathers, in money or in kind, for many generations; there were many cases in which the ryots were virtually tenants at will; and in such instances the plan was either oppressive or impracticable. By sweeping away the landholders, the only chance of a thinking and lettered order of society was destroyed. The plan of survey, minute and meddlesome, let loose an army of rapacious native agents upon the poor ryots, who were accustomed to suppose that nothing could be done without bribes. According to Sir Thomas Munro himself, not more than five per cent. of subordinate officials were innocent of peculation. As for the collection of the small instalments of rent (or tax, whichever it is called), it afforded more opportunity

for oppression and corruption than the power of any constitutionally intermediate body. Upon one pretence or another, the lower functionaries of the State might interfere with the ryot almost every day. Nor could the class, or any members of it, rise in fortune and independence. Where there is no middle class, or only one class, such elevation never happens. In this case the impossibility was strengthened by the remarkable arrangement that bad seasons and other accidents should make no difference in the payments. As a bad year or two might thus ruin the most thrifty and industrious cultivator, the temptation was irresistible—to live from hand to mouth, and be satisfied with what chance might send. Thus a whole series of districts sank down to the condition of the few which had before no zemindars, and which were noted for their depression. According to the accounts transmitted of the district Coimbatore, where the Ryotwar system worked best, the ryot paid, in 1828, about 1*l.* 13*s.* per annum out of a gross produce averaging 5*l.* It seems almost incredible that the cultivator should be expected to thrive on 3*l.* 7*s.* a year for himself and his family, allowing him as much cattle as he could keep in consistency with his tillage. It is not surprising that the revenue under the Ryotwar system should fall far below that raised in Bengal under the Permanent Settlement. And it is rather surprising if we do not perceive that the elevation of society in India must

depend on something else than arbitrary assortment of ranks and orders, and ingenious inventions for assigning land and collecting revenue. In as far as the people are higher and happier than under native anarchy, it is from the moral power with which we are invested in their eyes (and especially through the improvement visible in the character and conduct of our officials in India), and from the moral vitality which we are thus able to impart to them. Political systems must always be weak or useless means of social advancement till the advancement has itself proceeded a long way. Hence we may acknowledge the failure, on the whole, of both the schemes proposed for the redemption of native society, without losing hope of final success, or denying such beneficial consequences as arose from each. Under the one there was, no doubt, a considerable extension of tillage, and improved industrial animation. Under the other, the peasantry felt an immediate relief from the heavy hand of the landholder. For the rest, other influences were necessary than belong to any land revenue scheme.

The crowning glory of Lord Cornwallis's plan was supposed to be the wide diffusion of equal justice. For the first time, the peasantry saw the collectors of the revenue subject to laws which could be read to the people in a way which they could understand; and they were told that if anybody attempted to charge them more than the amount settled on the institution of the new plan, they had only to apply

to the courts to get justice. The courts were presently overwhelmed with applications, which it was found impracticable to deal with from the intricacy of claims and of the evidence brought on behalf of them. Matters were worse when the power of ejectment was restored to the zemindars against the ryots; and at the end of a few years it was evident that, whatever the law might say to it, the ryots were made to pay higher rents than the settlement authorized, and that they could not obtain justice when they appealed against the hardship.

Under the Ryotwar system there was even less chance of justice. Sir Thomas Munro believed that the old laws, as well as the old customs of the region must be adopted; and he therefore preserved, as an essential provision of the common law of India in civil matters, the Panchayet, or method of arbitration. No native, he said, would ever believe that justice could be had without resort to it. The people, however, abandoned it as soon as they perceived that courts on the European method involved less delay and expense. In three years' time, even the courts in which only native judges sat to administer European law, were resorted to in preference to the Panchayet, which might have preserved society in India (as Sir James Mackintosh declared that it did) before any European authority was established, but which was soon to be confined to those localities where the people had never seen an

Englishman, nor heard of the new plans which were on trial throughout the land. The benefits of the Ryotwar scheme, such as they were, were soon almost neutralized by the corruption of the judicial part of the plan. The collectors were found so entirely unable to levy the revenue, that it was considered necessary to make magistrates of them, and give them the control of the police. This was a return to the old grievance of the officers of Government sitting in judgment on their own acts, and employing the police to execute their own purposes. More and more power was given to the native collectors under the Madras Government, till, in a quarter of a century, they were authorized not only to impose fines but stripes. In 1826, the Directors sent over a strong protest against unchecked powers being confided to a class of men who were under constant temptation to apply them tyrannically. On the whole it is clear that benevolent and just-minded men had failed in discovering means of carrying justice within reach of the whole people. For many years the headman of the village was still the main hope of the inhabitants, and his traditional authority was worth more to them than any new judicial system; and the Brahmins and heads of castes did more to preserve order and reconcile differences in their communities than the best men who worthily placed themselves under the orders of the pure-hearted Cornwallis.

In reviewing the operation of the Permanent Settlement and the Ryotwar system, it is (as was observed before) necessary to bear in mind that complement of both schemes which was, after all, never introduced—a free trade, inducing an ample colonization of the country from Europe. When Lord Wellesley made a progress through the upper provinces, in 1801, he was delighted by the signs of improvement which were visible in such agricultural districts as were fertile enough to invite experiment. His suite had rare sport among the wild beasts which were disturbed by clearances in the jungle; and the ryots were improving their tillage in the confidence that their rent would not be immediately increased. It is true there were not a few old and opulent zemindar families, now reduced to poverty, weeping along the roadside, having lost the estates which their fathers had held for centuries. It is true these were succeeded, too often, by rapacious strangers, who used the restored powers of ejectment very harshly in regard to the ryots; but the great point seemed to be gained in the bringing new lands into cultivation. Such increased production would stimulate commerce when trade was thrown open; and commerce would bring capitalists; and the capitalists would make roads and canals, opening new markets, and, through the markets, further production still. Each village would no longer be all in all to itself—in good seasons glutted with food while poor in cloth-

ing; and in bad seasons pressed by famine because there was no access to any granaries. Each village was at all times like the hamlets of lower Bengal in a flood, cut off from access to every other, and subsisting as best it might; but the hope of the legislators of the time was that capital, industry, and commerce would unite the settlements into a prosperous community. This did not happen; and allowance must be made accordingly in estimating the Permanent Settlement.

It was not till 1834 that the commercial monopoly was taken up; and it is only recently that public measures of the most essential character have been even begun. If India had been freely thrown open and opened *pari passu* with the growth of free trade at home, the whole country would by this time have been so attached to English rule, and so devoted on the side of peaceful industry and commerce, that the Mussulmans would not have constituted an eighth part of the population; and the Mohammedan element, whether greater or smaller, would have been powerless at this day amidst the prevalent loyalty to British supremacy. As this did not happen, we must suppose that it could not happen; but when we remember how confidently the benevolent legislators of sixty years ago expected it, and what have been the consequences of the disappointment, allowance must be made for very bitter grief, though it may be more natural than philosophical.

settlements, carrying on the Company's commerce, and simply maintaining the frontier? It could not be done. The French had all but established their supremacy over the great prince of the Deccan, the Nizam; so that it was by a singularly fortunate union of chance, wisdom and courage that the French force at Hydrabad had been broken up, and the officers got rid of. Every prince in India would have been suborned by the French if we had not intercepted the operation. We have seen that the move against Tippoo was only just in time. Again, the Deccan was more variously peopled than Northern India, from more remnants of an ancient order of population being visible, and the Mogul power less thoroughly pervading and established. The Mysore usurpers showed what would have been the fate of all the Hindoo inhabitants of the Deccan if the British had sat still within their own frontier, and left all other states to fight out their quarrels, and the great Hindoo population to be overrun by the Mohammedan ferocity. If the more warlike Hindoos, as the Rajpoots and the Mahrattas, should set up their front against the Muscilmans, the prospect was simply of an internecine war. Under such circumstances the British could not sit still. Should they enter on a career of conquest by arms, by which the heterogeneous multitudes of inhabitants—tens of millions of each division—should become our subjects, dependent upon us in every act, and for

every resource of their lives? Nobody desired this. The English have no taste for foreign conquest, well as they like an ever-expanding field of action and enterprise. There was not an Englishman, from the King to the "interloper," who did not regard war in India as a great evil, however justifiable or necessary it might be. What was to be done, then, if we could neither quit the country, nor sit still, nor go forward in it? This was the question which Lord Wellesley had pondered on his way to the Cape, and ever since; and out of his meditations grew his Subsidiary system. About him were collected Englishmen of very various quality. Some of the old sort were mere traders and brokers, transacting their own little tyrannies on the sly, and wishing for the good days back again when the Directors were not so particular, or so well informed, or their officials so scrupulous and severe. There were a few traitors, picking up everything that could be reported to the Directors to the disadvantage of the Governor-General. There were honourable and earnest men, who were as difficult to deal with as the bad ones, from the effect of Anglo-Indian life at that period. It has been said that every man long resident there at that time was either Brahminised or *tête-montée*; either apathetic and submissive, or vehement and self-willed; and, though this could have been only partially true, Lord Wellesley found it sufficiently

irksome to have voices always calling out to him to let things alone, or to set his foot on the necks of one hundred millions of Asiatics. Very naturally and wisely he made up his mind, and incurred the reproach of pride of opinion rather than of infirmity of purpose. Right royally determined were his views and his actions.

Looking abroad from Fort St. George, what was there to be seen? First the Carnatic, where affairs were carried on under British control, in return for the preservation of the State. The Nabob could neither take care of himself nor his subjects, and he was a willing pensioner of ours, receiving one-fifth of the state revenue, and turning over to us the charge of his ruined villages, his wasted plains, and the orphans of the peasantry swept away in Tippoo's invasions. Northwards of the Carnatic was Hyderabad, the Nizam's territory, which depended on us for its welfare almost as absolutely as the Carnatic. There sat the restless and jealous Mussulman ruler in his palace, now sending to the British Resident to say how happy he was to be rid of the domination of the military French; now bending his ear to whispers about how easy it would be to drive the English into the sea, if he would only ally himself with the French, or the Mahrattas; and then again resolving to adhere to the British, because they who could conquer Tippoo, must be the strongest force in the field. After the fall of Seringapatam, the

Nizam was pettish and sulky about his gains, which fell far short of his expectations ; but the first cloud in his sky brought him penitent to the feet of the English. They refused to be implicated in his quarrels with the Mahrattas ; but within his frontier they virtually ruled. The great "rolling prairies" of Hydrabad were surveyed by English officials, to whom the peasantry paid their proportion of produce, thankful to be secured from further demands ; the old forts, perched on crags within the line of the Ghauts, were watched, or dismantled in case of their sending out marauders ; thieves were driven out of their haunts in the ruined cities which crumbled away amidst the sandy plains ; the British Resident dwelt in a palace built for him, with all the splendour of Asia, and all the comfort of Europe. Around him were miles of ruined dwellings and gardens run to waste ; and under his eyes were transacted the intrigues of a court which was described at the time "as a sort of experiment to determine with how little morality men can associate together." Every day there was a murder ; every week there was an intrigue. The Englishman, traversing Hydrabad on his elephant, was the conservator of society ; and the British troops were the only hope of peace and safety. West of the Carnatic lay Mysore, where the British were sincerely cherished for what they had done, as well as for what they might do. They had restored the

Hindoo family of sovereigns; and the Brahmins were promoting pilgrimages to the old temples, for the encouragement of knowledge and of commerce, while the industrial orders worked cheerfully under their relief from the savage rapacity of Hyder and Tippoo. Their old minister, Poonceah, who had used his influence for the best, was still in office and showing what he could do. In two years he made fifty bridges, seventy-four miles of canal, and 1,100 miles of excellent road. Looking down from that table-land to the west, we see Malabar, with its prodigious forests filling up the space between the Ghauts and the sea. The deeply-wooded chasms and the shelves of the precipices had many a time been sought by fugitives from the cruel Mahratta troopers who were for ever desolating the territory, north and south of Poonah. The Poonah sovereigns were still captives, and their territory was still administered by a hereditary Prime Minister, called the Peishwa, whenever the Peishwa could hold his ground against the northern Mahrattas, Scindiah and Holkar, who sometimes united against Poonah, and sometimes fought with each other on account of it. At the time when Lord Wellesley was about to inaugurate his system, the Peishwa was buried in pleasure, while agitated by apprehensions of all kinds. He dreaded dethronement by Holkar; and he was jealous of the supervision of the British. His person, swathed in white muslin, was elegant as a lady's;

the jewels he wore might almost have bought a European kingdom; his soldiery were bold, sinewy, robust and martial, compared with Indians generally, with nothing approaching to a uniform, and arms of any kind they could obtain. When the English were away the Peishwa was afraid of his soldiers, and of the news they might bring him of Holkar's approach, and of his carrying all before him; and when the English were at hand he insulted them in the rashness of fear, or broke his promises to them, as the thought of the French or of Scindiah's threats against the British crossed his mind. And again, if any British traveller told him of the goodwill of England his countenance was radiant with joy. As for Scindiah, he had usurped the portions of four princes, of whom the Peishwa was one and Holkar another. The mention of such a fact will show the state of affairs which Lord Wellesley was contemplating as well (for our purpose here) as the detailed history of each of the rival Mahratta chiefs. Then there was in the north, Oude, where no fulfilment of existing terms could be expected without an introduction of more British authority. Again, there were alarms of invasion on the side of Cabul, unless we could oppose a formidable front by means of native alliances. This much of description must suffice. It is sufficiently evident that anarchy must overrun the whole of Hindostan, unless some principle of policy were adopted, and a fitting scheme of

procedure based upon it. We see that a variety of states, some Mohammedan and some Hindoo, some ruled by ambitious and others by timid princes, some obstinate and others fickle, but all weak and ill-governed, were in fact awaiting from the British their sentence of destruction by internecine wars, or their reprieve by means of a wise British policy.

Thus it was in India. Elsewhere the Shah of Persia was watching his opportunity of pleasing France and Russia by assailing India with a force from Affghanistan. Bonaparte, who had communicated with Tippoo from Egypt, was keenly intent on every means of strengthening a policy adverse to the English, by sending clever agents to native courts; and Russia did not lose sight of her hereditary policy in regard to India, at a moment when Anglo-Indian councils were evidently troubled. In London, the great majority of the Directors disapproved of every step of Lord Wellesley's, while he was eagerly supported throughout by Mr. Pitt and Lord Sidmouth. By every mail the Governor-General received emphatic encouragement from the Cabinet, while it seemed too probable that the next would bring from the Directors an extinction of his policy. Under such circumstances what was the Subsidiary system of the Marquis Wellesley?

The first object was to enable all the states with which we had relations to keep their engage-

ments with us; and this implied at the moment excluding the French from those states, and precluding wars among the respective rulers. Such was the aim. The result was giving us virtual possession of the Carnatic, the Nizam's dominions, the Peishwa's territory, and the kingdom of Oude. Thus much was done before continual opposition from home induced Lord Wellesley first to relax in his policy, and then to leave his great scheme unfinished. If he could have foreseen how amply the India House authorities would acknowledge his merits before he died, his career would probably have been a different one in its later stages.

The method was determined by the degree of success which attended our arrangements in the Carnatic, and yet more in the Nizam's dominions. The conversion of the Nizam from a restless and dangerous neighbour into a firm ally produced a great effect throughout India, and fully justified, in the eyes of British statesmen there, an extension of the experiment. The Subsidiary system was a system of permanent treaties with the States of India, by which England was to supply a military force to each, and to control all state affairs, (except such as related to the royal family) through a Resident—the expense of both these institutions being borne by the state thus assisted. Lord Wellesley's policy was to use every occasion on which we were compelled, in either prudence

or humanity, to interfere with an Indian prince, to render that state subservient to English rule, while preserving its native court, religion, and customs. By this method all violence to native feelings and habits was avoided; the sovereign remained a visible object of the ancient homage, and the name of independence remained. The thing was gone, assuredly; but no method could have preserved it amidst the corruption and humiliation in which every state was sunk; whereas destruction by war and famine was thus averted. It is enough to say in the way of comment, that India has since been repeatedly at peace from end to end, for the first time in history; that the non-Mussulman portion of the inhabitants (seven-eighths of the whole at this time) have become more and more attached to our rule; that industry, security, and comfort (backward as they still are) have advanced almost as marvellously as the expansion of our frontier; and that the revenue increased at once, in Lord Wellesley's own term, by his system and his financial reforms together, from seven to fifteen millions. Such was his Subsidiary system. Now, what and wherefore was the Mahratta war?

The Mahrattas, we have seen, were first heard of in the direction of the Nerbudda, Canjeah, and (some add) Guzerat. The cause of their power in the southern regions was that their govt. combined

Sevajee, received from the Rajah of Bejapore, in the time of Aurungzebe, a gift of lands in the Carnatic, with the command of 10,000 cavalry. His first use of the advantage was to seize Poonah, in the character of a Zemindary, increasing the number of his soldiers, and levying contributions over a wide circuit. His descendants were feeble as princes; but there were always chiefs ready enough to adopt a marauding life; and more and more of them were for ever issuing from mountain retreats, to lay waste the country to vast distances. The worst consequence of the establishment of such a mode of life was that there could be no end to it. The larger the predatory force grew, the more impossible it was that it could be sustained otherwise than by pillage; and so prodigious had the evil become at the end of the last century, that Indian society, when our rulers took it in hand, was of two kinds only—it was either of the Mahratta type, an exaggeration of the predatory stage of civilization, in which the rulers were freebooters, scarcely pretending to govern their subjects, and rarely seen in their own cities; or it was under the rule of princes who cared for nothing but pleasure and the means of obtaining it, being rapacious in regard to revenue, but otherwise leaving their subjects to take care of themselves. Poonah and its Peishwa afforded an example of the one *régime*, and Hyderabad, with its Nizam, of the other. When the

Subsidiary system came into action this dreary alternative was driven beyond the pale of the British influence, and something inestimably better, however imperfect still, began to grow up at once within our frontier.

In Lord Wellesley's time the Mahrattas were widely spread over the north and west of India, fighting among themselves for the state of Malwa, while the head of their governments was at Poonah. They were the floating third party which occasioned and determined alliances between any other two; and great was the profit they made by being the bugbear of all. In 1770 they were the cause of the British alliance with the Mysore Sultans. The Nizam played fast and loose with us according to the demonstrations of the Mahrattas, who were the allies of both the Nizam and the British when Tippoo was humbled by the loss of half his territories in 1789. At the next shifting of the scene the Nizam had been perilously weakened by the Mahrattas, while they, again, were apprehensive of attack from Persia and Cabul, at a time when they were at war among themselves. It was plain that no peace could be expected, nor any stability of alliance and government hoped for, while these wild chiefs held their power of annoyance, and were driven by their needs to disturb everybody within reach. This was justification enough of an undertaking by the British to check the Mahrattas; but

more was furnished by the occasion used for the purpose.

Without going into the confused history of the Mahratta succession, I may just show the complication of the case at the opening of the century. The sovereign who died in 1797 left four sons, whose territory towards the north was usurped by the great chief Scindiah, who was careful to keep up a close alliance with the Peishwa at Poonah, as the head of the whole nation. Scindiah's great rival was Holkar, whose field of action was north of the Vindhya range, in Malwa, but who came down into the Deccan in the hope of touching Scindiah in the most sensitive part, by humbling the Peishwa, the feeblest of the whole set. He marched to do this in 1801, driving the Peishwa from his capital. The deposed prince petitioned for British aid, in return for which he would become tributary to the Company. Lord Wellesley availed himself of the opportunity, and used it for comprehending in the alliance as many of the Mahratta chiefs as could be induced to join it. On their part, Holkar and Scindiah both sought the British alliance as a resource against each other. The first steps taken by the Government were to afford refuge to the Peishwa; to send an ambassador to Scindiah's court; to station a large force on the Mysore frontier, as a protection against Holkar; and to prepare the Bombay troops for any service

might be suddenly required. These preparatory events happened in 1801 and 1802. It was on the last day of 1802 that the treaty of Bassein was signed—the instrument by which the Peishwa bound himself to perpetual alliance with the British in return for their restoring him to power. It was no slight engagement for the English to enter into; and the real enterprise was nothing less than carrying on war with France on Indian territory. Not only were the Mahratta troops organized and commanded by French officers, but so large a grant of territory on the Jumna and the Ganges had been made to one of them, M. Perron, as to constitute a French state in the heart of the northern provinces. The aggregate territory of the Mahratta chiefs extended from Delhi to the Kistna, and from the Bay of Bengal to the Gulf of Cambay; an area of 970 miles by 900, comprehending a population of 40,000,000. The Governor-General's "brother Arthur" had been for many months meditating how this war should be carried on, if it should become inevitable; and here he now won his first great fame. He set forth on his enterprise three months sooner than his own judgment would have advised, and without the protection of well-filled rivers—in March, that is, instead of June, 1803. But by his celerity he saved Poonah, which was to have been burned, according to the orders of Holkar in his retreat. The Peishwa re-entere

his capital on the 13th of May. It was presently apparent that Scindiah, Holkar, and the French, with the Bhoonsla and other second-rate Mahratta chiefs, were all in alliance against the British; and the crisis was so important that full powers of every kind were committed to General Wellesley, to save the delays and possible differences which would have arisen from references to the head-quarters of Government. At the peace of Amiens, Lord Sidmouth had negligently allowed Pondicherry to be restored to France; and there French troops were now landed, to be mustered in M. Perron's northern territory. Not a man of them, however, got beyond Pondicherry; and as soon as war with France broke out again, they were all made prisoners. Without this aid the enemy were abundantly strong. Their force consisted of 210,000 infantry and 100,000 cavalry. It was a grand occasion for our young general; and grandly he met it. He and his brother planned the campaign, and fully wrought out their work.

Four British armies were to attack the territories of the confederated princes on all sides. All the four armies were victorious, and the business was finished in five months. The Deccan force, where Wellesley was, followed Scindiah in various marches in the Nizam's dominions (the Nizam being just dead, and Hyderabad in an excitable state); and Wellesley, with only 4,500 men, came upon the enemy, 30,000

or 40,000 strong, and, not waiting for Colonel Stevenson with his larger force, won the battle of Assye, on the 23rd of September, 1803. The victory of Argaum followed, and the great fort of Gawulghur, supposed impregnable, was taken in December. The Bhoonsla first sued for peace, and Scindiah followed. Colonel Murray had humbled Scindiah's power in Guzerat, before the battle of Assye was won, the great fort of Baroach being taken on the 29th of August. The third army was under Lake, who had the same powers in Hindostan Proper that Wellesley had in the Deccan. The French fled without fighting; and M. Perron's *prestige* was gone, and the French power with it, from the moment when he placed himself and his interests under British protection, with bitter complaints of his allies. A great victory within sight of the minarets of Delhi enabled Lake to restore the deposed sovereign, Shah Aulum; and the whole Mohammedan power in India declared for allegiance to England from the moment when the Mogul Emperor was reinstated. The battles of Muttra, Agra, and finally Laswarree were won—the latter on the 1st of November. The Mahrattas, led by the French, were the most formidable foe ever encountered by us out of Europe. They had every resource of science, engineering, courage, and discipline; yet they were always beaten. At that time Lake's reputation stood as high as Wellesley's, and deservedly. Both

received the thanks of Parliament, and Lake a peerage, and Wellesley the Knighthood of the Bath. The fourth field of warfare was Cuttack, which it was indispensable to keep open for communications between Calcutta and the two southern presidencies. The French were riding in the Bay of Bengal, and a land route must be preserved. Colonel Harcourt, with a small force, worsted the light troops of the Bhoonsla on every encounter, took the city of Munickpatam, and the fortress of Barabuttee; and thus the whole province of Cuttack was ours, and the entire coast, from the Hooghly to Pondicherry. On a promontory of that coast, among the salt sands of Cuttack, stands the great pagoda of Juggernaut, a landmark to voyagers, and the centre of pilgrimage by land. The priests came to put their temple and themselves under Colonel Harcourt's care; and he accepted the charge.

It was one of the most wonderful campaigns on record. The warlike Mahratta princes were attacked on a scale worthy their martial reputation. Their enemy came upon them from a wide circumference, from the sea shore, the passes of the Ghauts, the high plains of the Deccan, the tracks of the forest, the river-fords, the salt sands of Cuttack, and the rank swamps of Bengal. The Mahrattas found themselves driven in, like wild beasts by a ring of hunters; and there was no point of the circle that they could break through. They could only submit;

and they must have felt as if the world was witnessing their submission from every ridge, from the Himalaya to Mysore, and from every spire and bastion, from Delhi to Seringapatam. Our accessions of territory were considerable; but much greater was the extension of our virtual dominion. The States, released from Mahratta tyranny, were thankful for our alliance: and even the conquered princes were in admiration at the moderation of the terms proposed. Their possessions were secured to them, on conditions which would prevent their being mischievous. They were, in fact, the vassals of the English; but they enjoyed their nominal dignities and their wealth. If their 'occupation' was gone, that was because it was not compatible with the welfare of their neighbours. Instead of being crushed by a merciless conqueror, they were permitted to pass under the Subsidiary system of a statesman. Parliament had long before interdicted conquest in India for the sake of territory: but this case was so clearly one of war with France, on another soil, that the world could not have wondered if the Mahrattā war had been considered an exception to the rule. As it was not so considered, it remains as great in its moral quality as in its military accomplishment, and its political and social results.

CHAPTER XIV.

BEGINNING OF SEPOY MUTINIES.

1763—1805.

“Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadowed livery of the burnished sun,
To whom I am a neighbour and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
Where Phœbus’ fire scarce thaws the icicles,
And let us make incision for your love,
To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.”

SHAKSPERE.

“Foster a raven, and it will peck out your eyes.”—*Proverb.*

UNDER all modifications that we have been induced to try, our Indian government has always and necessarily been grounded on a military basis. The condition and temper of our armies has always been the first consideration in discussing the state of our great dependency. The Subsidiary system was in itself an essential extension of this basis; and in consequence, the condition of the army in India became more and more interesting to the authorities at home as one state after another entered into alliance with us: and when, in 1806, and again in 1809, a rude shock was given to our confidence in our Indian

soldiery, the interest spread far down among the ranks of the general public. By the political biographies, and other records of the early years of the century, we see that our Indian Empire was generally supposed to be in imminent peril through the discontents of our forces. Present circumstances throw a strong light of illustration and interest on the incidents of the various Indian mutinies, from the enlistment of the first Sepoy to the reign of Lord Wellesley's successor, supposed at the time to be probably the last Governor-General of India.

The panic once over, statesmen began to be ashamed of it, and to see or say that there were dangers greater even than mutiny. If our soldiers had been all of one race, any extensive mutiny must have been fatal, they allowed; but our troops were of singularly various quality, even then. Not Moscow itself, on a coronation day, could show so strange an array of warriors, gathered from the diverse regions of the Russian empire, as an Indian Governor-General could parade on any occasion which might compel him to concentrate his forces. The advantage of the case was that there were always troops of one race, country, and faith, ready and eager to put down those of another, on the occurrence of rebellion. Mussulman was against Hindoo, and different Mohammedan sects and Hindoo tribes hated one another as cordially as Islam and Heathendom could hate each other. No combination of indigenous

powers, large enough to endanger the British, could ever take place; and thus, while our rule must become more essentially military with the extension of our authority, the perils of a military rule must diminish. So men said when two great mutinies were over: but few or none had a consolatory word to say while they lasted.

For nearly twenty years prior to 1766 our Sepoys were organized in bodies of 100 each, commanded by a subadar, a native officer, under the eye of European superintendents. For thirty years more the companies were formed into battalions of 1,000 men each, still under their subadars, but commanded by European officers. For four-and-twenty years more—that is, up to 1820—two battalions constituted a regiment; and at that date the battalions were reduced to 500 men each. During the earlier periods, the spirit of the Sepoys of the two oldest presidencies was that of the devoted soldiery of Clive during the siege of Arcot. They worshipped the force of character shown by the creators of their function, as appeared by their bringing their children of two or three generations to salaam before the portraits of Coote, Meadows, and their beloved “Wallis.” They threw all their faculties into their profession, gloried in it, and prospered in it, so as to excite wonder in all beholders, and enthusiasm in their commanders till the changes which took place in 1796 in the constitution of regiments, and in the proportion of

Europeans to natives. In the war against Tippoo, the Sepoys undoubtedly gained much in point of discipline, by a larger intermixture of Europeans; but it seemed to take some of the heart out of them, and to lessen at once their pride and their confidence. The difficulty was already experienced which has perplexed our management of our native army at intervals ever since. When the proportion of European officers was smallest the native soldiers were on their best behaviour, and most attached to their British commanders—their pride and self-respect being engaged in their duty; but then, it is not safe to leave native soldiers so much to themselves. On the other hand, when the regiments have been most abundantly officered by the Company, they could be better looked after; but their complacency was depressed, and their attachment to their commanders visibly cooled. Such is the testimony of Sir John Malcolm, a highly qualified observer, and an eye-witness of devoted Sepoy service on the one hand, and Sepoy mutiny on the other. It was he who obtained for Cawder Beg, a native cavalry officer, the command of a body of 2,000 of the Nizam's regular horse, in the campaign of 1799, and who watched his progress, as aide-de-camp of General Campbell, during the reduction of the Ceded Districts, and as one of the most confidential of Sir Arthur Wellesley's officers in the campaign of 1803. It was Malcolm who recom-

named a native officer to the Shah of Persia, to organize and instruct a body of Persian soldiers, and was relied on the good military conduct of our Sepoys in Georgia, where they distinguished themselves in several battles, in the service of the Shah. He saw how nobly the Sepoys fought in the tremendous conflicts of the Mahratta war, and he witnessed the two extremes of Sepoy conduct in the Vellore case in 1806, when one body murdered their officers, and another put them to death for doing it. After many years' study of the native force, Malcolm's opinion was that the changes which improved the discipline of the Sepoys, by introducing more Europeans and more English discipline among them, did far more mischief than good by impairing the original spirit of military loyalty which distinguished Clive's soldiery in the first crisis of our eastern progress. Distinguished as he was for his high conservatism, there was nothing in any possible Government of India that Sir John Malcolm deprecated more earnestly than a Commander-in-Chief who should countenance martinet rule in the army, "forgetting that no perfection in appearance and discipline can make amends for the loss of the temper and attachment of the native soldiers under his command."

The Madras Sepoys hold the first rank during the early history of our Indian dominion. Those of Bombay were of a different kind, and applicable to a different service. They were recruited from all

available sources. Not only were Mussulman and Hindoo thrown together, but the Hindoos were of various countries and castes, some being scarcely superior in rank to the Pariahs on the Coromandel coast. There were a few Christians also, and many Jews; these last being found to make the very best soldiers till they grew elderly, when drink usually degraded them. One great advantage of the admixture in the Bombay force was that it was more available for foreign service than that of Madras. It was, in fact, scarcely possible for high-caste soldiers to undergo a voyage without loss of caste. A few did undertake the necessary self-denial when invited by popular officers to volunteer; but a positive order to go to sea was sure to produce mutiny. There was no such difficulty with the Bombay force, while their attachment to their commanders could not be exceeded. It was always a well-weeded force, from the circumstances of its position. Discontented recruits could always abscond into the neighbouring Mahratta territories, and those who remained were thereby proved superior to the temptation. Tippoo could never induce any of the hundreds of them whom he held prisoners to enter his service, though he offered every possible inducement, and punished them bitterly for refusal: and when at length they and the European prisoners of war were on their weary march to Madras, in order to be sent round to Bombay, some of them

nightly eluded their guards, and visited their officers (by swimming tanks or at other risks) to bring them money or food, saying that Sepoys could live upon anything, but that Englishmen needed mutton and beef. This was truly a spirit not to be trifled with. There are several instances on record of the deliberate intervention of these men to save their commanders from the certain death which they drew upon themselves. They thought all was explained, when they pleaded that officers' lives were worth more than Sepoys.

As for the Bengal native army, it originated with the few companies who attended Clive to Calcutta, in 1756. The first battalions raised in Bengal were called after the names of their commanders—each company by that of its captain; each company having its own standard of the same ground as its facings, and a device derived from its subadar,—a crescent, a sabre, &c. In 1760 the British officers in Bengal were 18 captains, 26 lieutenants, and 15 ensigns, all busy in organizing battalions, consisting each of ten companies of 100 men each. In half a century, the Bengal Native Infantry were not fewer than 60,000, commanded by 1,500 European officers. The soldiers were of the proudest classes of natives—Mohammedans and high-caste Hindoos—a large proportion of them Rajpoots, the very representatives of Hindooism—an order come up, as it were, from the depths of the past to show

the modern world what sort of men Hindostan was once full of; a stalwart soldiery of tall stature and unmixed blood: men believing nothing, and insisting upon everything they were accustomed to; with no faith, but plenty of superstition; servile to power, and diabolically oppressive to helplessness: prone to self-torture, without any power of self-denial; bigoted to home and usages, without available affections or morality; smooth in language and manners, while brutal in grain: incapable of compassion, while disposed to good-nature; good-tempered in general, with exceptions of incomparable vindictiveness; timid for a twelvemonth, and then madly ferocious for a day, or heroically devoted for an hour; frivolous and fanatical; liars in general, and martyrs on occasion; scoundrels for the most part, and heroes by a rare transfiguration. Such were, and such are, the Rajpoots of whom our Bengal army has always been largely composed, and who have been the perplexity of plain-witted Englishmen for the hundred years just closed with the Delhi atrocities of 1857.

None but the students of Indian history are aware how common mutiny has been in all the presidencies, and especially in Bengal. After the war with the Oude Nabob, in 1763, there was an outbreak, presently retracted. In 1764, eight of the Red Battalion were blown away from guns—twenty more being sentenced to death in another form. It was on this

occasion that three grenadiers stipulated for precedence, as before related. In the very next year Clive showed extraordinary confidence in his sepoy, on occasion of the celebrated mutiny of the Bengal officers. Finding that the cashiered officers hung about the neighbourhood in a body, Clive sent a corps of Sepoys to disperse them, or bring them in prisoners. Yet were these high-caste soldiers untrustworthy when the sea was in question; for in 1782, three corps in Bengal mutinied on the first rumour of foreign service, so that it was necessary to break them up, and draft them into other battalions. One of the three corps was the "Mathews" which had won high honour during a career of twenty-six years. How well the native troops would serve in the most laborious and perilous expeditions by land is shown in the two grand marches from Bengal to the other presidencies in the time of Hastings. The Bombay march has been described before; and it has been related that 5,000 Bengal infantry, with a small force of cavalry and artillery, arrived at Madras at a most critical moment, after a march of 1,100 miles through Cuttack and the Circars. It was in that campaign that our Bengal sepoy is said to have first encountered European troops hand to hand. Excellent soldiers as the French were, they met their match in the Rajpoots, who mainly composed the Bengal force; and the traditions of the fight at Cuddalore were one of the main grounds of

confidence in our native army when a French invasion of India by way of Cabul was afterwards expected. The Bengal Cavalry was an inconsiderable body long after the Infantry had won many honours. It was only just ready for use when the Mahratta war broke out. As it consisted mainly of Mussulmans, it rushed eagerly into the conflict with Mahrattas. Mohammedan cavalry and Rajpoot infantry won the highest reputation during the five months of the first Mahratta war; and it was they who, in the most dreary moments of toil and discomfort to which Lake's army was subjected, cheered their European officers with the words, "Keep up your hearts! We will take you safe to Agra." Lake won their attachment, and the deeds they did in his service would fill a volume. If such a volume were before us now, it would be no easy matter to believe that we can never more have a Bengal native army (and to have none at all is better than to have one that cannot be relied on); yet, during this whole period, there were occasional disclosures which made prudent men, and especially officers who knew the Sepoys best, warn their rulers and the English nation that our Indian Empire, resting on a military basis, lay under conditions of radical insecurity. In all the presidencies the fidelity of the Sepoys depended too much on personal predilection, and on hazardous chances, to be considered safe and certain, at any time and under any circum-

stances. The most startling of these disclosures took place on the 10th of July, 1806, in the Madras presidency.

The eighteen children of Tippoo—ten of whom were by this time married—lived in due state in the fortress of Vellore, 88 miles west of Madras. They had sufficient liberty to be able to surround themselves with a mob of the sort of courtiers known in India as the vilest specimens of humanity it is ever our lot to deal with. The royal family had the palace entirely to themselves. The fort was garrisoned by 1,500 native soldiers, and about 370 Europeans, living in their respective barracks. At three in the morning of that 10th of July, the sentries were bayoneted by the sepoy, and shots were fired into all the windows of the European barracks. The mutineers had possessed themselves of all the ammunition, and planted a field-piece in command of the door. Parties were detached to shoot down any officers who should attempt to leave their dwellings, and the colonel and lieutenant-colonel were thus murdered. The English families inhabiting these separate houses were presently butchered. The English privates in the barracks had no means of self-defence against the fire from without; and the few officers who got to the fort had only their bayonets. The princes' servants were seen encouraging the mutineers, and keeping up their communication with the palace; and presently the standard which bore Tippoo's

emblems was hoisted. It was pulled down as soon as British soldiers could get to the flagstaff. The mutineers parted off in search of plunder; and many waverers absconded from the scene when they found that they were under no direction. By some means or other the news reached Arcot, nine miles off, so early that a strong body of cavalry was before the Vellore fort by eight o'clock. When the guns had come up, it took only ten minutes to dispose of the mutiny; and before noon hundreds of the insurgents were slain. The villagers and the police caught most of the fugitives, and many delivered themselves up as innocent men, put to flight by the guilty: but 600 remained over for trial. 'There was the same difficulty in deciding what to do with them that we shall have to encounter when the time arrives for us to deal with a multitude of native soldiers who were certainly not staunch under trial, and who lie under vehement suspicion of treason; but against whom there is no proof of criminal acts, and who plead compulsion for their defection. To punish them effectively might be unjust: to turn them adrift was perilous; to restore them would be criminal lenity; to transport them would be in every way inconvenient, and in all probability unjust. Civil and military rulers differed, and the wisest men found it hard to advise. Finally, the regiments were broken up, and their numbers erased from the army list. Absent members were retained under vigilant watch;

the rest were discharged as for ever incapable of serving the Company, the officers being supported by small pensions. This decision was suspended long enough to allow the agitation to subside, and to inflict the penalty of suspense in large measure. All who were proved guilty of massacre or robbery were punished in due course.

This celebrated massacre of Vellore, in which 13 European officers and 82 privates were killed, and 91 wounded, ought never to have happened. As usual, it was seen afterwards how criminal was the carelessness, and how shocking the folly which had trifled with the most significant symptoms of what might be expected. A fakeer had promised in the bazaar the downfall of the English; and for many weeks it had been known that secret societies had been formed to bind the Sepoys in a common resistance to that petty tyranny about military dress which Sir John Malcolm was so earnest in condemning. The old turban was ordered to be exchanged for a head-covering more resembling a hat or helmet in shape. Earrings were to be no more seen, nor the distinctive marks of caste painted on the forehead; and a kind and degree of shaving was ordained, which no native soldier could submit to without inordinate pain of mind, and a reluctance dangerous to excite. This was quite enough to induce a suspicion that the native soldiers were to be altogether likened to the Europeans. The Court of Directors declared their

officers evaded the enforcement of the order, the men grew the more suspicious about the depth of the plot. Unmerciful floggings were inflicted on account of these silly turbans; and every stripe alienated a native heart. Tradition lets nothing drop among the imaginative and credulous Asiatic peoples; and, while our British public of the present generation needs to be instructed in the narrative of the Vellore massacre, every descendant of the mutineers is full of stories of signs and portents, and of deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice for an ancient faith: full also, no doubt, of impulse to mutiny again under the remembrance of that old time, and the example of the new. If the Bengal mutiny extends to Madras, there will be a grand revival of the traditions of Vellore.

The other great mutiny, that of Madras in 1809, was of a wholly different character, and one which needs no detailed notice here, however important it was in itself. It was a mutiny of European officers against the Company, the immediate cause of which was the abolition of tent contracts. Under those contracts commanding officers had supplied tents and travelling accommodation to their regiments, making considerable profits out of a transaction, the principle of which was essentially bad. A spirit of thoroughly unmilitary insubordination was shown to exist to an appalling extent; and no ruler was perhaps ever placed in more embarrassing circumstances than Sir

George Barlow, the temporary successor of Lord Wellesley. Only three years before it had become clear that our dependence on the native troops was to the last degree precarious; and now it appeared as if the very spirit of military subordination and fidelity was extinct in the Company's own officers—as far as the Madras army was concerned. The readers of the *Life of Sir John Malcolm* will remember the story in its minute details. It must suffice here to say, that the mischief was rather got over than cured at the time—the number of insubordinates being too great to be dealt with by the higher authorities in the way their mutiny deserved.

Between wholesale resignations and dismissals, and the imposition of a test in the form of a loyal declaration, a truce was established, which allowed agitation to come to a stop, and a means of return to the hasty and penitent—at the expense of much irritation to the feelings of the faithful and stedfast.

It would be hard to say which was the more alarming and discouraging manifestation to the Company and the Government at home, and their functionaries in India—the massacre at Vellore, or the mutiny at Madras.

CHAPTER XV.

OPENING OF THE NORTH-WEST.

1804—1809.

"Better is a handful with quietness than both the hands full, with travail and vexation of spirit."—*Ecclesiastes*.

"It is easier to build two hearths than always to keep fire on one."—*Proverb*.

"Our list of nobles next let Amai grace."—*DRYDEN*.

THE brilliant months of the Mahratta war were followed by anxious years of suspense about a policy. No period in our Indian history was more important than these ten years were felt to be at the time; and late events invest it with a reflex interest which would tempt me to linger over its incidents if my limits would allow. Even the slight sketch which is all that my space affords cannot but show how and why Indian events were in reality as important as anything that was happening in Europe at the same time, though the period comprehended the last war with France, extending from the close of Lord Cornwallis's negotiations at Paris, and the declaration of war with France, to the evacuation of Spain by the French.

The affairs of the period had to be transacted without the Wellesleys. The General returned to England early in 1805, and how he was engaged for ten years after, no Englishman needs to be told. The Governor-General was in a harassed state of mind for the last year of his official life, and impatient to get home, to defend himself against his accusers and explain his policy. The worst of it was that he relaxed in the application of his system during that last year. Whether outward circumstances compelled the change of policy, or whether it arose from fluctuation in his own mind, under severe trials of his firmness, he and his policy were not what they had been; and some of the consequences may perhaps be afflicting us at this day. His situation was, as was truly said at the time, "a cruel one." The financial affairs of the Company were in such a state, that the means of carrying on war did not exist; while at the same time, there was no other prospect of settling India, and procuring a durable peace, than by carrying the force of our arms somewhat further. Lord Wellesley was, therefore, checking his best negotiators and commanders in the very career in which he had started them, and accusing them of warlike propensities, while he was receiving the same reproaches from England, and irritating his devoted servants into saying that he was stultifying his whole policy by deserting it at the most critical moment. So eagerly was his resignation accepted in

England, that his successor arrived at Calcutta before he could get away—that is, in July, 1805.

His successor was evidently selected on account of his pacific tendencies; and he was bound down, by the fact of his appointment, to reverse the policy of his predecessor, in as far as it involved opposition to the native rulers. It was old Lord Cornwallis who now came out again to try to obviate war in Hindostan, after having failed in the same effort in France. He was infirm and feeble when he arrived; and he died, in the course of a progress through the northern provinces, in little more than two months from his arrival. It would seem scarcely possible to do so much mischief in so short a time as he did in that interval, with the best intentions, and in the finest spirit. The leading agents of the system of Lord Wellesley were told, in despatches full of urbanity, and in the blandest state-paper style, that they were well-qualified, he was convinced, to appreciate his predominant wish, which was to remove every impression that the British desired to exert influence in any of the native states, and to show that the entire restoration of every native power to independence was to be the policy of England henceforth. While the perplexity of Lord Wellesley's agents under such instructions was at its height, the mild and loyal-hearted old man sank into his grave on the banks of the Ganges, leaving the Mahrattas joyful in the belief that the British capacity for military rule

was exhausted, and that the choice of war or peace lay in their own hands. It cost no little blood and treasure to set them right.

The question was of the settlement of Central India. Holkar would neither be quiet himself nor let the other Mahratta chiefs keep to their terms. He had, indeed, nothing to depend on but war. In peace he could not pay his troops; and he subsisted them and himself by incursions into the territory of the Nizam, and our other allies, as much after the peace was made as before. An illegitimate son, and with the vindictive characteristics of that class of royal posterity, Holkar was the only really popular Mahratta chief. "The One-eyed," as his troops called him, was always grave, usually easy, courteous, and dignified in his manners, but occasionally savage in his wrath. At one hour he would be playing with a lapdog, and the next burning a village, with intense eagerness that no inhabitant should escape the slaughter. Sometimes he distributed vast treasures among his troops, when they had succeeded remarkably in a raid in a rich district; and presently he would be seeking the jungle, with only a handful of followers, declaring that he could carry his all on his saddle. Rich or poor, he held great sway over the mind of Scindiah and the other princes; and the most intelligent British agents said openly, at the beginning of 1804, that the peace had been made too hastily and carelessly, and that

Holkar would not only appear in the field again but would instruct Scindiah to break through the terms of the treaty. For months after, he was employing his agents in all directions to stir up revolt against the English, and ravaging the domains of their allies, while pretending to treat; till, in November, 1804, he was thoroughly beaten by General Fraser and Lord Lake, and, as they believed, annihilated as a potentate; but he took refuge with the Rajah of Bhurtpore, one of the most generously treated of our allies, who sustained Holkar till he could retrieve his fortunes, and whom we were therefore obliged to call to account and punish. This was a fair specimen case, in the eyes of the Directors, of the working of Lord Wellesley's system. They said that, however it might look on paper, the actual effect of it was that we never were, and never should be, at peace. We had undertaken to keep down a hydra; and every head we struck off was to be the last; whereas it was plain that the work would be interminable. They insisted that there should be an end to it at any cost. They desired to circumscribe, and not extend, their empire; they desired trade, and not war; in spite of their positive prohibitions, their servants were making them the masters of India; and the end could be nothing but prostration and ruin. They imparted the fact, which it always causes keen anguish to the commercial mind to admit, that the Company "was fast approaching a

state of bankruptcy," the revenues of the country having been devoted to support its wars. No more money would or could be raised; and peace must be made on any terms. Henceforth it must be understood throughout India that the British would not interfere, more or less, with any of their neighbours, but mind their own commerce, and retrieve their own affairs.

Nothing could appear more reasonable than this view in London: and Lord Cornwallis did not scruple to engage to carry it out, unaware that when he arrived within the Mahratta range, he might find that the only way to a peace lay through war. The view in India was this. In 1803, just before the Mahratta war and peace, there were several strong states outside the British frontier, and a constant liability to war accordingly. In 1805 there was not one. The extension of the organization of alliances was nearly complete; and another effort or two would make it entire and secure, leaving nothing to be done but to keep the way open for the great natural laws of society to work in the production of industry, wealth, and civilization. If the work was stopped short of this final effort, the prospect would be fearful. Where Holkar's sword and brand had passed, the ground was like that which the demon had trodden, where no grass would evermore grow. There was a time when Candeish, for instance, was all alive with men and

their works, as may be seen by the great fortresses which tower above the jungle, and the ruins which everywhere underlie the rank vegetation of the valleys and plains: whereas now the jungle had spread to the horizon, and was swallowing up more fertile territory every year. This was because the natives would never return to places laid waste with such slaughter as Holkar inflicted. The ghosts of the murdered haunted such places, the people believed, and the lands were under a curse. As the Mahratta bands thus made a wilderness wherever they went, and could subsist only by extending the process, the alternative lay between the suppression of this marauding, and allowing it the final absorption of the whole country. The best security for the British frontier, said the Malcolms and Metcalfes, would be an outlying region of peaceful and prosperous small states, such as the Subsidiary system would always provide; whereas, if a non-intervention policy were pursued, these states would all be swallowed up successively; and when they were devoured, and the Mahrattas enriched, and we impoverished, we should have to go to war at last, under every disadvantage. In ten years, said these negotiators, the effects of such a policy would be plain enough. All that was wanted was money, with which to make an example of Holkar; and then a glorious future lay before the British in India. The needful soldiery was on the spot; the will and the right arm were

quarrelled, he interfered to secure the peace, giving fair notice that he should enforce his interposition by arms, if necessary. He was sufficiently hardy in his policy to improve, rather than lose, the remains of popular respect for British authority, which our recent Mahratta treaty had left us. The mere quarrels were soon settled in this way; but the cure for the devastation of banditti was yet to be found. The population to be ruled over by the Company's chief officer was now one which might well be oppressive to his imagination, and which may go far to account for the shortness of the periods of office. Hastings had been Governor-General for seven years. Lord Wellesley had ruled seven years, and was sufficiently worn at the end of six. Lord Minto ruled for six years. It was a prodigious empire already. His subjects were above 75,000,000: viz., 15,000,000 of Mussulmans, 60,000,000 of Hindoos in their varieties, and 30,000 Europeans. These numbers are mentioned here, because this is, as has been hinted, a turning point in our Indian history.

The questions of policy which I have touched upon are very interesting; but there was another incident of the period which is even more so. Glimpses were by this time opening into a new region, far beyond the ken of the earlier British visitants of this vast country. An Englishman, Leedes, had once lived at Delhi: and when Lord Minto arrived, a British Political Resident, Charles

Metcalfe, was stationed there. It was regarded as a very remote point; and the reason why any Englishman was there at all was that the puppet-king who had been restored to his ancestral throne, as the successor of Aurungzebe, was incapable of ruling his dominions. This first of the renewed series of Mogul sovereigns was blind and old, and satisfied to let the English govern in his name. He was made miserly by long previous poverty, and saved treasure, which intercepted the tyranny of his worthless successor for some time. But extremes of profligacy and cruelty were always going forward in that Delhi palace, where the king of our mutineers is now defying our authority, whether by compulsion or voluntarily. It was necessary to have a representative of British authority at Delhi, to collect the little revenue there was, to keep the machine of government going, and to curb the excesses of the court which it was thought fit to sustain. The first British visitors there little dreamed that in half a century the English cantonments would occupy a wide area, and that long rows of deeply thatched bungalows — the detached dwellings of British residents — would spread like a beautiful suburb of the latest Delhi; or that it would be there, as at a central point, that the attempt would be made to extinguish our *raj*, or dominion, under circumstances which would render Delhi a doomed city, ranking with certain other old “cities of the plain.”

To them, Delhi was an out-lying station beyond the verge of British India; and when they mounted the renowned Khuttub Minar, the noblest architectural shaft in the world, and looked abroad over the undulating plain of Hindustan Proper—at one time scorched brown under the summer sun, and at another green with springing wheat, or gay with flax and poppies—they gazed wistfully northwards, hoping, in the clearest weather, to catch a sight of those wondrous peaks of the Himalaya, 200 miles off, which may be seen thence on rare occasions. All beyond their view to the north-west had been hitherto an unknown land—talked of as men talk of countries they have never seen, when there was an alarm of Zemaun Shah coming down upon the Punjaub, or of the King of the Five Rivers aiding the Mahrattas. But so far were the British from conceiving that they had any business in that region, that their best political agents argued for Lord Wellesley's settlement in its application to Central India, on the ground that the small intermediate states would thus constitute a good barrier between us and the formidable tribes of the north-west. At this period, however, the mists beyond our frontier began to rise and dissolve; and some dim disclosures were made of the high-lying territory where the tamarind and the taree-palm would not grow, and where the flowers of England, and the brilliant verdure of Ireland, and the snows and

pinces of Scotland, would one day surround British dwellings, the resort of fugitives from the Delhi traitor and the Mahratta fiend of our own day.

Those who lived in the remote north-west were spoken of, even up to the end of the last century, under that spell of the marvellous which peculiarly bewitches adventurers on a foreign continent. The British in India spoke of the Sikhs and Affghans as their fathers spoke of the followers of Timour and Ghengis Khan. We have old-fashioned books which describe their soldiers as tall and ferocious, with piercing eyes, and as the sands of the sea for multitude. With the Mahratta war came the occasion of our making acquaintance with the people who are now apparently supporting us against our own Bengal army, and with the country which remains firm to our tread, while our great Bengal territory is sliding from under our feet,—to be recovered, no doubt, and chiefly by means of our vantage ground in the north-west. In the time of Hastings, the Sikhs had declined from their former power; and for many subsequent years they were played fast and loose with by the Mahrattas, like the Nizam and the Mysore Sultans, and the Nabob of Oude, and the Mogul Sovereign, and every other power within their reach; and the Sikhs were changeable accordingly in their dispositions towards the English. In 1788, they offered us their alliance; and in 1803, they fought against Lake's army at Delhi. Humbled

by the result of that war, they offered their allegiance, which was accepted; and they soon had opportunities of rendering service when detachments of British troops were hard pressed by flying bands of Mahrattas. It had been prophesied, a quarter of a century before, that the destruction of the Sikhs would be prevented in one sense, and accomplished in another, by the advent of a prince who should rise on the ruins of the whole commonwealth; and the prophecy was about to receive its accomplishment when our unhappy peace with Holkar was ratified. An able man had risen up among the Sikhs, astute, self-willed, ambitious, and wholly unscrupulous, bent on learning from the British, while pretending to hold them cheap. Some of the British saw him without knowing it, in the first instance; and, from the confidence with which the story is told, it seems probable that one or more of them recognised him afterwards in the midst of his splendour. It appears that Runjeet Singh once walked into the English camp in disguise—eager to see for himself what that soldiery was like which had conquered Holkar and Scindiah. This was the time when the Subsidiary system should have united the British and the Sikhs; but the system was in disgrace at the moment; the English frontier was not to be carried beyond the Jumna; and the small Sikh states were left in the lurch.

The Sikh chiefs had till now been a confederacy, forming a sort of rude republic such as alone is practicable in the physical force stages of society. They were now to have a King. Runjeet Singh rose to supremacy among them, and obtained Lahore in 1799, making it his capital, and reducing the strongest of the chiefs to be his feudatories, paying him homage, and supplying troops. Among them, they made spoil of Umritsir, taking it from the widow of a brother chief; and Runjeet Singh appropriated the place as a second capital. He made his profit out of the quarrels of the Affghan princes, marching westwards, and receiving homage along the banks of the Hydaspes, which showed him what hopes lay in that direction. Such enterprises were usually prefaced by a holy bath, in some sacred lake near the sources of the rivers, or some holy mere among the western mountains, or some consecrated river, precious to another faith, if not his own. In 1805, he must bathe in the Ganges at Hurdwar, where the blessed stream bursts from the Himalaya; and he thus saw how affairs were going on eastwards of the Punjaub. It was soon after necessary to decide on a policy in regard to the British and the Mah-rattas; and the occasion served for making Runjeet the avowed sovereign of the Sikhs, for the purpose of founding a military monarchy. Runjeet went on somewhat too fast with this enterprise, crossing the

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Sutlej rather too often to please the British, and interfering so perpetually and tyrannically with the small Sikh states as to bring the latter to the Delhi Residency with petitions for aid against him. The English could not, under the restrictions of the time, promise aid; and Runjeet sent messages that he meant no harm; so that the petitioners went home uncertain whether it would not be best to join forces with their oppressor. It was a favourable opening for French intrigue against us; and, in the fear of invasion from Affghanistan, British envoys were sent in 1808 to the courts of Cabul and Lahore. Mr. Elphinstone went to Cabul; and Charles Metcalfe, then only three-and-twenty, won great fame by his statesman-like management of Runjeet Singh, through every provocation which the levity, the insolence, and the perfidy of the rampant sovereign could inflict. A body of British troops was advanced towards the Sutlej, to support the demand that Runjeet should cease to interfere with the states beyond his river frontier; but even then he trifled and tricked, till Sir David Ochterlony issued a proclamation declaring the Cis-Sutlej states under British protection, which was to be supported by force of arms. Apprehending defection under the inducement of such promises, Runjeet hastened to secure what he had got by obtaining British sanction; and a treaty was signed in April, 1809, by which Runjeet Singh was made the ally of the English, while pre-

vented from devouring any more of his neighbours on our side of his dominions. The most remarkable fact in connection with this treaty is, that it was never broken on either side. During the thirty years of Runjeet Singh's subsequent life he was our ally; and it was only during the earlier years of this term that we had cause for any anxiety about the connection. No doubt the treaty was substantially advantageous to him; but it is also understood that much of his steadiness was owing to the deep impression he received of the superiority of the English from the qualities manifested by our young envoy. If such were our boys, what must our greybeards be, in wisdom and patience? Such was obviously the question awakened in Runjeet's mind: and it should rouse our minds to a fair appreciation, not only of individuals so distinguished as Charles Metcalfe, but of the Indian training which produced such a succession of them as the last half century has supplied.

Thus it was that before the next renewal of the Company's charter, we had seen new regions opening before us—from whence came new calls of duty, more than temptations to enterprise. Nobody wished our responsibilities to be extended; if we could have stopped at the Jumna everybody would have been glad; but we were threatened with invasion from the allied French, Russians, and Turks: and it was necessary to interpose a bulwark of states between

the Cabul frontier and our own, and to take care that those states were not weakened by wars among themselves. Our treaty with Runjeet Singh marks a period in our Indian history even more distinct and significant than the new charter of 1813.

CHAPTER XVI.

SETTLEMENT OF THE CENTRE.

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“Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness as pillars of smoke?”—*Song of Solomon.*

“It never troubles the wolf how many the sheep be.”—VIRGIL.

IN 1808 a Committee of Parliament had inquired into the financial affairs of the East India Company, taking into consideration a petition from the Company for the repayment of a large sum owing by Government, and for a loan of like amount, on account of the pecuniary embarrassments caused by disturbances in India, and the falling off of commerce at home. The great development of our domestic cotton manufacture had so damaged the import trade of the Company that, in the main article of piece goods, the value of the importation in 1807 was only one-sixth of what it had been ten years before—less than half a million, instead of nearly three millions. In consequence of the Committee's report, one million and a half was paid over to the Company, being 300,000*l.* above what was owing from Government.

At the same date, an eminent Liverpool merchant, Mr. Wm. Rathbone, happened to be in London, where, struck by the spectacle of the Company's shipping, he inquired of a merchant at his elbow why London allowed a trade so great, and so capable of expansion, to be engrossed by a corporation. His friend gave him such illustrations of the power of the Company in London as showed that nothing could be done there to obtain a free trade. If any movement were made, it should be in the provinces; and Mr. Rathbone lost no time in stirring up Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, and Paisley to demand the opening of the trade. Five years of the existing charter remained, and the interval was so well improved that a considerable relaxation of the monopoly was obtained in 1813. After the 10th of April, 1814, British merchants might trade to the Company's territories, and to India generally; but the China trade was still reserved. The territorial accounts of the Company were to be henceforth kept separate from the commercial; and by this provision a test of the working of the monopoly was created, and a good preparation was made for the final extinction of the commercial function. The Directors had always acted on the assumption that the immutability of Hindoo habits would for ever confine trade within a fixed amount; and they now reasoned and pleaded accordingly. But human nature was against them; and a few years sufficed to prove

that Hindoos are so far like other people as that they will lay hold of good things, when brought within their reach. Bishop Heber told us, by his journals, that he saw the natives in the interior buying English comforts and French adornments wherever they could obtain them. From the first hour of competition it was clear that the great Association which had introduced Great Britain and Hindostan to each other, and bridged over the gulf between the civilization of the one and the barbarism of the other, could not compete with the ready wit and alertness of private speculators in supplying the material wants and wishes of seventy millions of Asiatics. The Company had complained in 1808 of the decline in their imports of cotton goods. After the opening of the trade their exports of manufactured cottons dwindled to almost nothing, while private merchants were exporting those goods to the amount of a million and a half per annum, with an increase from year to year.

After the Committee of 1808, Parliament attended to the Company's affairs from session to session; and in 1810 there was a further petition for pecuniary assistance—partly on account of the great number of the Company's ships which had been taken by the enemy, or had perished at sea. A succession of loans kept the India House open till the time arrived for setting about the new charter. The Company unceasingly declared, as they doubtless

sincerely believed, that they could no more exist politically than commercially if their commerce were invaded, because their territorial revenue had never been equal to their expenses: and their sales at the India House, and remittances of goods from India and China, were their reliance for meeting their obligations in England. As they admitted that their commercial profits arose mainly from the sale of tea, that branch was preserved to them. But it was this plea of theirs which created the new arrangement about their accounts—the separation of the territorial from the commercial. Their supreme dread was of that colonization of India from Europe which had been anticipated and desired by the authors of both the systems of land revenue before described. The Company declared that such colonization would go on, surely, however slowly; and that the consequence would be an ultimate separation from Great Britain, for the same reasons which had wrought out the independence of our American colonies. This was too remote a contingency to affect the terms of a charter granted at a time when the security and development of India were a matter of urgent concern; and after 1813, any Briton might trade to India, or take up his abode there, without leave from any quarter. These particulars require notice here, not only because they are historically true, but because they are the early incidents of that transition period in the civilization of India, with which our present

misfortunes there have no doubt the most radical connection. From the moment when the trade monopoly was relaxed, however partially, the institution of railways and canals, steam-communication, the electric telegraph, and everything most confounding to Mussulman pride and Hindoo apathy, was only a question of time. It is true we were not then in possession of most of those things ourselves: but they were about to be revealed; and before, as well as after, they were known to us it was equally certain that the introduction of our arts and modes of life, belonging to a different stage of civilization, must create a revolution in an ancient polity indigenous in a remote continent; a revolution which would take form in some portentous manifestation which the Company apprehended more distinctly than they could explain. Their warning of the growth of a republican spirit in India, causing in time a coalition of all orders of inhabitants against Great Britain, under a new Declaration of Independence, looks now like a melancholy joke; and it seems strange that those who should have known India well could conceive of such a settlement of a populous Asiatic country by Englishmen as could be likened to that of our American plantations. But it should be remembered that a class who knew India even better than the Directors and Proprietors at home have shown quite as little foresight and power of interpretation of social phenomena. Hardly one in a thousand of the Company's

officers in India has at all anticipated the sort of revolution that would be induced by subjecting India to the conditions of European life in the nineteenth century. Hardly one in a hundred has seen what was going on before his eyes, or reasoned on what amused his observation or interested his understanding. The great Brahminical controversy which ran high before a mile of rail was laid—how far the merit of pilgrimages would be affected by railways, which the Brahmins knew the pilgrims would certainly avail themselves of, ought to have been as portentous to our political residents as to any Brahmin. Such suggestive phenomena have abounded for half a century past; and now that it is too late, we see very clearly what they might have taught us. It is not necessary to enlarge on this, but only to point out what the action of the opposing parties really was at a juncture which both knew to be critical. The Company resisted change, under a vague and mistaken apprehension of the consequences, and of the means of precluding them, but with a just conviction that some revolution must ensue. The free-traders failed to perceive what safeguards would be required throughout a transitional period, while rightly insisting that it was not optional with any party concerned whether there should be change or not. In new cases it is the event which discloses the political philosophy; and it is only now that we fully learn what it would have been wisest to do when the Company's monopoly was

first effectually assailed. At the time we speak of, the case of the opposing parties was that of the Spanish proverb, "Whichever way you take there is a league of bad road." The merchants saw only the good highway, and exulted; the Company fixed their gaze on the bad league, and began a new period under severe anxiety and depression.

The chief affliction was that the wars were not over in Hindostan. The Directors emphatically professed a peaceable policy still; they enjoined it upon their servants; they implored, they ordered, insisted, remonstrated; but still, every representative they sent out made war, and declared that he could not help it. At this time the Directors seem to have committed the matter into the hands of the new Viceroy, Lord Moira—for the offices of Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief were united in him. His appointment was caused by political changes in England; and, between the fruitlessness of their own efforts to preclude war, and the stringent action of the Board of Control, the Directors saw nothing for it but hoping the best from the rule of an old soldier who might be more likely than a civilian to estimate the evils of perpetual conflict. Lord Minto's resignation was on the way when his successor was nominated, by order of the Prince Regent and his ministers; and Lord Moira, afterward Marquis of Hastings, arrived in Calcutta in October 1813. He had scarcely

arrived when tidings came from various quarters which acted on the old soldier as the trumpet on the warhorse. His council were of a different metal, and they had an empty treasury before their eyes, and impending calls for payment on their files; and the consequence was a fierce controversy at the Board while Lord Moira was in Calcutta, and in the form of documentary recrimination afterwards. But the power passed over into the Governor-General's hands when he began to show that he could save money and generate revenue, as well as defend his territory and his neighbours. When his 'nine years' term of office closed, he was almost equally estimated by all parties. His military successes were brilliant, and his territorial policy was large and generous, while his social administration was prudent and gentle. It seems to be generally agreed that it was in his time that our Anglo-Indian reputation reached its highest point, and justified the best hopes.

First, there was war with Nepaul; and, as it was an affair of prime necessity, the Burmese who troubled our eastern frontier were kept quiet provisionally, till they could be properly attended to. The Goorkhas, who domineered over the chief part of Nepaul, and were delighted with a frontier which cut deep into our territory and that of states protected by us, had made irruptions which were not to be forgiven; and in Lord Minto's time a force

had been sent against them which met with signal discomfiture, on repeated occasions, before Lord Moira's arrival. Charles Metcalfe, looking on from Delhi, had strong convictions on two points at least, and ventured to lay them before the Governor-General within a month after his arrival. He was persuaded that no good could come of a war with mountaineers among the spurs of the Himalaya, while Central India remained unsettled, and all alive with unscrupulous enemies and treacherous allies. And, again, he was confident that our very footing in India was imperilled by the rash practice of attempting to take fortresses without breaching—the cause of our disasters in the Nepal war. The grand fault of the British in India, said this high-hearted young man, was, despising their enemies; and, unless they could be cured of this folly, the whole course of their Indian experience would be a group of calamities at intervals, always retrieved, as far as reputation went, by valour and endurance, but each time lessening the superstitious reverence of the natives, and finally causing our complete overthrow and expulsion. Lord Moira was struck, as he well might be, by such a despatch (worded with all due modesty) from a young civilian, and summoned Metcalfe to his presence, and followed his advice. After the loss of lives which could be ill spared, the fortress of Kalunga was at length bombarded and taken; and travellers at

this day can only know by local tradition where it stood.

By the wisest men the Goorkhas were pronounced the most formidable enemies we had yet encountered in India. They would require our best available strength to reduce them ; and yet, as Metcalfe said, there was Runjeet Singh watching from the north-west how we got on, in order to decide whether he should adhere to our alliance or not : there was Meer Khan, the prince of bandits, and a vulgar and ferocious copy of Holkar, hovering about in the Rohilla country, and ready at any moment for a swoop on Delhi or Agra ; there were Scindiah and the Rajah of Nagpore laying their heads together about the best time for attacking our long frontier, from Agra to Cuttack and the Bay of Bengal ; and there were the Pindarrees, the vultures sure to come clustering wherever we left a heap of dead : all these must be not so much met on the frontier as kept on the other side of it by the *éclat* of our expeditions against the Goorkhas ; and thus far we had sunk in their estimation. It was the most critical moment of our Indian empire. This is often said, in every empire ; but it was so firmly believed in Hindostan at the beginning of 1815, that proposals were made to summon all the troops that could be spared from the two southern Presidencies, and from all our colonies, and from England—where, however, all our disposable force was soon to be otherwise occupied, between Napo-

leon's return from Elba and his humiliation at Waterloo. The Goorkhas were conquered, with much loss to us, and little glory, and by means of our artillery and money. They lost the territory between the Sutlej and the Gogra, which it had taken them thirty years to acquire; and the whole circle of watchers were asking, as we were of each other, how our empire was to be preserved, if the defence of one section of our frontier cost us so dear. The doubt was soon put to rest by the issue of the Pindarree war; and the truth was, we could hardly encounter such difficulty anywhere else as among the intricate defiles of Nepaul, held by an enemy as brave, skilful, systematic, and confident as ourselves, and far more prudent. Our superiority in guns and money gave us the advantage; but the impression left by the Nepaul war was that the Goorkhas had better be our allies than our enemies. It is well for us now that they still are so, and that Nepaul is a friendly territory. Some of our countrywomen and civilians have found refuge there this summer, and write warmly of the kindness of their reception. Our Goorkha soldiers appear to be our best reliance, till European reinforcements can arrive; and, but for a fatal infirmity of purpose at head-quarters, a force already on the march from Katmandu would have saved Cawnpore and relieved Lucknow, and more or less checked the whole mutiny. The territory acquired in 1815 gave us a

standpoint on the Himalaya, and strengthened our hold on the great plains below, while curbing the feuds of the hill tribes, and opening ways for commerce into the heart of the mountain region.

Then there were the Pindarrees to be dealt with. They were not a race, or a tribe, or a sect, but an agglomeration of lawless men of all faiths, and all ways of living and thinking that were compatible with horsemanship and marauding. Any man who could ride and levy plunder might be a Pindarree. For a century they were heard of only as freebooters; but fifty years ago, they were strong enough to be treated with by the Mahratta chiefs, and to give the name of a war to our conflict with them. The Mahrattas would not eat with them, nor allow them to be seated in their presence; but they gave them tracts of land, or a license to seize them for themselves: and thus they rose in the world, though the plunder of portable goods was their chief resource. As they began to convert their adventurers and their lands into a sort of state, they occasionally fought against the Mahrattas, and were bid for as auxiliaries and when once their posts of command were recognised as hereditary, a confederation of chiefs became possible and convenient to themselves, and extremely annoying to every other power. Their confederacy sucked in all the loose elements of society: every villain who was tolerated nowhere else could always go to the Pindarrees; and wherever they went

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they ruined men enough to increase their numbers by leaving no other alternative than to starve. Their numbers were never even to be guessed at, nor their visitations to be anticipated. Two or three hundred of them, well mounted, and carrying nothing but breadcakes for themselves and a feed or two for their horses, struck across country for their destination, riding faster than the news could be sent. They at length extended their line so as to enclose and sweep clear a certain area, burning whatever they could not carry away, and torturing their victims in indescribable ways and degrees, and then turned back the way they came, meeting a body of supporters who helped them to carry their booty, and to fight their way, if opposed. But they usually got off before the alarm had spread. Meeting and dispersing like the birds of the air, they presented no point of effectual attack; and the most successful conflict with them was a mere shooting of single specimens, whose place was sure to be immediately supplied. In Lord Minto's time they had become strong enough to collect annually, to the number of 15,000, for a raid; generally into the British, or some allied territory. While the English were engaged in the north before the stockades of the Goorkhas, in October, 1815, eight thousand Pindarrees crossed the Nerbudda, and, dividing into two parties, swept the entire territory of the Nizam, meeting on the banks of the Kistna. How much further they meant

to go there is no saying; but the river was still swollen, and they must turn elsewhere. They turned east and swept round by the coast, and along the Godavery, carrying an enormous booty, and having met with no check except in one night attack near the outset. This feat was planned by the ablest leader they had ever had—Cheetoo, whose name had been more or less formidable for ten years; and he sent out a second expedition of 14,000 horsemen as soon as the first had returned. No wisdom or valour availed against them, for they could never be caught, though the smoke of fifty-four burning villages went up in one day, and seventy in another. In May, 1816, they were at Cheetoo's head-quarters again, with a second vast booty, having signalized their twelve days' visit to the Company's territories by plundering 339 villages, killing 182 persons by deliberate cruelties, wounding 505, and putting to the torture no less than 3,603. Lord Moira was well aware that the Peishwa, Scindiah, and other Mahratta chiefs, were cognisant of all this, and that they were intending to invade our territories in concert with the Pindarrees, while the British forces were engaged with the Goorkhas. Our peace with Nepaul baffled this calculation, and Lord Moira at once resolved to turn his army, before it was dispersed, against this infamous coalition. The moment he received the necessary sanction from home, the attack began; but all the successes that

were won by vigilance and valour seemed to do no good, and the Pindarrees made a wider sweep that year than ever. Sooner or later, they were sure to be weakened by divisions; and this happened in 1817, when they were also alarmed by a series of bad omens. Nothing discouraged them so much, however, as a thorough defeat of the Holkar Mahrattas, accomplished by Sir John Malcolm and Sir Thomas Hislop, on clear evidence of the treachery of the Mahrattas. This battle of Maheidpore (in Malwa) took place in December, 1817; and it yielded great booty of elephants and camels, in the first instance, and then a very advantageous peace. After various shufflings on the one side, and punishments inflicted on the other, the Mahratta territory was put under British protection—several strong places being ceded in perpetuity to the protectors. Scindiah saw his own interest, and was at last convinced that it would be wise to keep to his engagements.

The Pindarrees must now take care of themselves; and their weakness was soon evident. Pressed hard by British detachments, Cheetoo could not get to his home among the hills; nor could the different Pindarree bands achieve a junction with him. He appeared in various unexpected places, at great distances; but these flights cost him all his baggage, and most of his horses. In January, 1818, his lair was discovered, and the hill tribes of Malwa were

set upon his traces. They destroyed almost everything and everybody belonging to him: but they could not catch him. Two hundred followers shared his hardships and escapes; and they repeatedly advised him to surrender to the British: but he was persuaded he should be sent out of the country, and he preferred death in any form. During his snatches of sleep he was continually dreaming of that fate, murmuring "The black sea! O! the black sea!" Even now, he got away again into the Deccan, and was at large for another year, losing some of his followers at every step, but being sheltered by some Mahratta officer or other. He passed the rainy season among the Mahadeo mountains, and then endeavoured to take refuge, in February, 1819, in Scindiah's fortress of Asseerghur, which had sheltered him before. He was refused admittance, and turned his horse's head towards the neighbouring jungle. Some days after, his well-known horse was seen grazing near the verge of the forest, saddled and bridled, and carrying a bag of cash, seal rings, and letters from a deposed rajah, promising great things to the wandering robber. After a little search, some clothes were found, and then some bones, and at last a human head, which was recognised as Cheetoo's. The human tiger had succumbed to his brute brother. The last of the Pindarrees met with a singularly appropriate death.

I have given a somewhat disproportionate space

CHAPTER XVII.

OPENING OF THE SOUTH-EAST.

1619—1854.

"He sees such a desperate rapaciousness prevail; such a disregard to equity, such contempt of order, such stupid blindness to future consequences, as must immediately have the most tragical conclusion, and must terminate in destruction to the greater number."—HUME.

"If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest."—*Proverbs* xxix. 9.

For every summons to attend to affairs at or beyond one frontier in India, we may confidently reckon on a challenge from the opposite boundary. We have been glancing up towards the north-west, where the Five Rivers converge in the mighty Indus, which can be reached by us only over a sandy desert. While our Indian statesmen were discussing the question, as a matter of political speculation, whether it would be best to have that sandy desert or those rivers for our final frontier, or even the mountain range beyond both, it became necessary to look in the opposite direction, and see what was to be done where the other great river, the

Burrampooter (the son of Brahma) divided our territories from the Burman empire on the east. This prodigious stream involved no interests of ours for the first two-thirds of its course. It rises due north of Allahabad—the length of Oude, the width of Nepaul, and the loftiest mass of the Himalayas lying between. It skirts the Himalayan range on the Thibetan side, flowing eastwards as if it meant to cut China in two, and escape into the Pacific; but at the end of the Himalayan range, it turns their base, flows south-west through Assam, and, having received the contents of sixty rivers in Assam alone, takes a southern course, along what was our Bengal frontier at the time we are contemplating. A troublesome frontier it was sure to be, considering its own character, and that of the people who lived beyond it. As a river it is good for neither one thing nor another. It is nowhere fordable, and it is not navigable. It is equally impracticable where it is one mile wide and where it is six—when it is lowest, when it is fullest, and at all intervening times. In the dry season most of the canals into which it is divided by islands in its broadest parts are mere mud, with channels of great depth between; and in spring, when swollen by melted snows, it is a truly fearful object—slab with mud, while rolling a dirty foam on shore, and tossing on its waves trees of the largest size, and corpses of men and beasts, swept down by the inundations above; in which nearly the whole of

Assam occasionally lies under water. Day by day it makes and destroys mud banks and sandy shoals, so that any navigable use of it would be impossible if vessels could encounter the snags, sawyers, and floating forest trees, with which those of the Mississippi are not comparable. Some Hindoos treat it as a sacred river, but only those who cannot get to the Ganges. The two rivers communicate by several small channels; and when they pour out their contents into the Bay of Bengal, their mouths are separated only by islands. A territory subject to two such streams can be nothing but an area of swampy islands, in which the higher specimens of the human race cannot live; and of all frontiers none are so productive of mischief as those which are the resort only of degraded or lawless men, who go there to snatch what they can get from the *débris* of Nature, and the leavings of the brutes which make their homes in such places. In those jungly swamps, and the reeking forests which grow above them, the alligators pursue men, and men hunt the tiger and circumvent the elephant. Their mutual needs caused some little commerce to pass between the people of the confronting provinces. The eastern people wanted salt from the bay; and the Bengal folk drew some of their supplies of cotton, silk, and rice from Assam. They were rivals in the matter of ivory and gold-dust, which last they fished from the rivers. All were

sunk in the depths of superstition—the Assam people professing Hindooism, though eating animal food with their rice; not beef, but snakes, rats, ants, and grasshoppers, with dogs for an occasional delicacy. As for the southern part of our frontier, there were endless troubles at the time we are now concerned with between the people of Chittagong and Arracan—subjects respectively of the Company and the Burman empire. They were for ever at feud—proud Mussulmans having succeeded to the Buddhists in Chittagong, and the people of Arracan being no more disposed to defer to the subjects of the Company than other Burmese. The passes from the one to the other were mere tracks cut in the forest, which were overgrown after every monsoon; and trespasses, depredations, and skirmishes were for ever going on. As no Europeans could live in such places as the jungles and forests were then, the natural process was to leave matters pretty much to themselves; and then followed the inevitable claims generated by such a method. Each party of skirmishers claimed as a frontier the furthest point reached, and usually a good deal more. The Burmese sovereigns, for instance, sent word from time to time that they must have the whole region as far as the Ganges, including Moorshedabad. Many disputes arose out of their demands that fugitives of intermediate races should be delivered up to them, while, on the other hand, the subjects of the Com-

pany had no peace on account of the incursions of their Burmese neighbours.

Those who denounce all the Burmese wars that we have been engaged in are probably unaware of the difficulties caused by such a frontier as the one just described, where barbaric races live on either side, and where the necessary military force cannot be stationed on account of a climate fatal to the soldiers while endurable by the enemy. When to all this is added the usual series of provocations which the British in India have had to undergo; the intrigues of our European rivals among our neighbours, and the efforts of those neighbours to draw the subjects and the allies of the Company into treason and disaffection, it may be less wonderful than it appears at first sight that we should have had wars with Burmah, ending at length in the annexation of Pegu. It might seem at first sight very strange that we should have submitted to any intercourse with the Kings of Ava which could involve humiliation, trouble, or cost, or have burdened ourselves at last with a territory which lies beyond our natural boundaries, and was not particularly tempting, in any view; but it alters the case not a little to find that the French were once paramount at the Burmese, as they were at the Persian court—endeavouring to induce the sovereign, in each case, to promote the invasion of India through his dominions; and when it is

understood that spies were again and again traversing the Company's dominions, on a pretended mission in search of religious books, but in reality to treat with the Mahrattas, the Mogul sovereign, and Runjeet Singh at Lahore, about the expulsion of the British, our transactions with the Burmese court and people are seen to involve more than treaties and quarrels with a barbaric neighbour. Common sense might suggest that Englishmen would be hardly likely to put up with all the trouble that we have had with the Burmese, and to go into a war with them, at least without some reason—and some other reason than conquest; for it is evident that if conquest had been the object, it might have been achieved at a very early date. What the story really was may be in a manner conveyed by a very brief sketch of our relations with Burmah.

when the kings of that peninsula went to war; but no adequate attention was given to them at the time, and we remained unknown to the Burmese sovereign, as regards our national character, during a long course of years which might have been improved to the advantage of our commerce and our reputation. One king slapped his thigh in the ambassador's presence, and made his courtiers laugh at the idea of the East India Company being of any use to such a great man as he was; another would not write a letter, but only an order, to the Governor-General, because he issued nothing but commands to anybody on earth; and this one sent, in return for the Company's fine presents, twenty-four heads of Indian corn, eighteen oranges, and five cucumbers. The Company's flag was, on this occasion, planted at Bassein, to the firing of guns; but the treaty which authorized it was presently found to be a mere pretence for getting hold of bribes. Within two years—that is, in 1759—all the European gentlemen at the station were murdered by an incursion of armed Burmese, just as they had assembled at a dinner-party; and only a midshipman escaped to his ship. The king fancied that the English had been corresponding with one of his enemies, and connived at the act of which some French adventurers had the credit. Our mission to the successor of this king, Alompra, failed, and we gave up the Bassein settlement, having thenceforth a walled factory at Rangoon,

within which our flag was kept flying; and for five-and-thirty years the Company's traders carried on some commerce, under hard conditions of insult, delay, and heavy duties. While they were treated no worse, and perhaps rather better than other merchants, they could put up with the airs of a pagan king who knew no better. Next began the frontier difficulties. The native inhabitants of Arracan, driven desperate by the oppression of their Burmese conquerors, became a jungle banditti: and when they had committed any extraordinary act of daring or plunder, they hid themselves in Chittagong, which had been the Company's territory since 1760. The first the English heard of it was that five thousand Burmese troops had been marched into Chittagong to apprehend the fugitive Mughls, while 20,000 more were on the Arracan frontier. They were met by a force, under General Erskine, which impressed them with some respect; they withdrew from our soil, the commander visited the British general, and, on our side, the fugitives, being tried and found guilty, were surrendered. Thus far, the matter seemed to end well: but the incident fixed the attention of the French on that region; and M. Suffrein's maps and plans were attended to at Paris, and his opinion quoted that "Pegu was the country through which the English might be attacked in India with most advantage." One consequence of this new light was the establishment of a permanent Resident at

was sure to beat us; and he misinterpreted the whole affair from having just been informed that the new peace at Amiens was a boon granted by France to the English, on condition of the latter restoring all places in India which had ever been French. The disarming of the British escort was actually ordered, and prevented only by the interposition of the heir apparent, who, however, could not prevent the French envoys^c being quartered next door to the English Colonel Symes—these 'envoys' being a French felon, just escaped from Calcutta gaol, an American supercargo, and two half-caste youths, born in Ava. Thus matters went on, the kings telling all the world that the Company had paid homage to the golden feet, and besought the protection of Burmah, and kindly assuring a Governor-General from time to time, that if he had only applied in the right quarter, the armies of Burmah would have gone overland, and given the whole continent of France to England; whereas, if any measures were taken without leave from Ava, the King would be obliged to go overland, and take England. One viceroy at Rangoon, who had been civil to our envoy, was to be crucified in seven fathoms water, and so floated to Calcutta, to show us the consequence of our making friends among the King's servants. "In a fit of caprice, however, the culprit was not only spared but promoted. In 1811 there was a second invasion of Chittagong: and the

king's object for several months was to get possession of Captain Canning, our envoy, and his suite, as hostages for the delivery of more of the Mugh fugitives. Not succeeding in this, and hearing a vivid description of two of our vessels of war which were off Rangoon, the king lowered his commercial duties, and sent messengers to Calcutta, to ask for the surrender of his enemies. An unfortunate concession was made on this occasion by the Supreme Government, which proposed (in consideration of the unhealthy nature of the service) that the Burmese troops should be admitted into Chittagong, to search for the fugitive Mugh. A demand was instantly made, in the form of a stipulation, that the British should be at the cost of the troops while so employed; and it was announced that the King of Ava had lent troops to the English on their petition. When the Mugh finally succumbed, after the death of their last king, their chiefs surrendered to the Supreme Government as prisoners of war; and when Lord Moira conclusively declined to deliver them up, it was hoped that the troubles with the Burmese were over with the extinction of the Mugh; but the King of Ava only betook himself to other schemes. It was then, in 1816, that discoveries were made of his intrigues at Lahore, and tamperings with several of the states, for the purpose of occasioning a general revolt against the English rule. The Mahrattas were the great hope of the traitor-king; but they

were destroyed before he could mature his plans. Runjeet Singh was doubtless too sagacious to be deceived as to which was the stronger power. Before giving up for that time, the King of Ava made one more effort. By deputy he wrote to Lord Moira to demand the cession of Chittagong and Ramoo, Dacca and Moorshedabad, under penalty of annihilation from his wrath. Lord Moira replied through the Viceroy of Pegu, regretting that the King of Ava should be no better supplied with advisers, and hoping that the writer of so insolent a letter would be chastised. Then followed a war of succession in Assam, and conflicts which left no chance of tranquillity to our frontier, where villages were sacked and burned, while no further apology could be obtained than that it was by mistake. Again, our elephant hunters were seized, and a Burmese army of 18,000 men, under the king's best general, announced an intention of following the Assam refugees into our territory. This was in 1822. It was clearly high time to strengthen our frontier; and the more speedily because the Assam princes had lost their game, and their country became a province of the Burman empire.

There was no respite from the provocations of our neighbour. In 1823, leave was asked for the Burmese army, with all its prisoners, to go home through Chittagong. This was refused. Next, Chittagong was encroached upon, and our island of Shapouree

was claimed, and after various refusals seized in the night of September 24, 1823. A thousand men made the attack, giving out that an army of 15,000 men was in Arracan, and that sixty boats were about to convey it into Chittagong. Three Sepoys were killed, and three wounded; and it may be regarded as a proof of great forbearance that the Governor-General wrote to the King of Ava before proceeding to repel the invasion by force. No answer was sent, otherwise than by an order to the Governor of Arracan to keep down the English, and hold the island. The Burmese obeyed these orders, and set up forts on our territories, secured by strong palisades, from which a British officer was driven back with loss in February, 1824. There was no avoiding war after this.

Nobody but the King of Ava could doubt about the issue of such a war, as far as the quality of the combatants was concerned. But the real and formidable enemy of the British was the climate. Rangoon yielded at once; the authorities fled at the first shot, and the entire population, except one hundred persons, made off into the jungle. The jungle was the mischief. The natives threw up stockades wherever they rested; and fever and sunstroke decimated the invaders. The Burmese died fastest, by many to one; they left their ammunition behind them; they laid waste their fields, and were evidently going to perdition as fast as possible; but then, the English were suffering in their proportion, and while they sent home assurances that

the Burmese were perishing, there were no signs of peace being any nearer. At the end of 1824, there was no peace. In the autumn of 1825 there was still no peace, though Sir Archibald Campbell had a series of successes to report; but there was now a good deal of talk about it. Then the English defeated the great Burmese army, ten times as many as themselves, and peace was reported to have followed, as it ought. The treaty was actually signed; but one day it became known that it had never been forwarded to the King. He could certainly never pay for the expenses of the war; and his servants hoped to persuade the General to take rice instead of money, and to cut down and carry away any trees he pleased. After the next victory at Melloone, the treaty, which had been again signed; was found in the minister's house, still unseen by the King. In February, 1826, the thing was really done. The expenses of the war were paid by the Burmese, and the provinces of Tarvi and Tenasserim were ceded to the Company, as well as those of Assam and Arracan, by which it was hoped that the quiet of our frontier was secured.

The King of Ava was afterwards declared insane, and succeeded by his brother, who might as well have been insane, too, for any benefit which we could obtain from his abilities. One of the terms of the peace was that a commercial treaty should be formed; and as soon as the treaty was ratified, Mr. Crawford's well known mission to Ava took place. The nego-

tiation lasted from Sept., 1826, to Jan., 1827, and it was conducted very much as former conferences had been, ending in the yielding up of some of the most important points on the British side, and in our being unable to obtain any fulfilment of those which remained; while, to crown the discomfiture of the official representative, who had suffered under all manner of neglect and insults, the treaty was called by the Burmese a royal license granted to the English.

In December, 1829, the British in Moulmein were attacked from Martaban. After fair warning, which produced no effect, a detachment of our soldiers was sent to Martaban to seize the offenders, when some native followers fired the place. This act, wholly unintentional on the part of the English, produced a wonderful effect; and no more molestation was offered to the British in that region for a course of years.

In the north, however, there were troubles which rendered the cession of Cachar necessary to the integrity of our frontier; and when our Affghanistan war was impending, King Tharawaddy drew his rabble rout of an army forward, ready to enter Bengal when the British should have, as he supposed, turned their backs. Except on their own territory, with its swamps and forests, and hideous malaria, there was nothing for us to fear from them. But it became necessary once more to encounter them.

there. Our merchants at Rangoon declared in 1851 that they must leave the country, if they were not protected from the exactions, and the oppression, even amounting to torture, inflicted by the local authorities. The treaty had been clearly and grossly violated, and reparation was demanded at the court of Ava. It was the old story over again, except that some civil promises were made at first. Then there were insults; and Rangoon was declared in a state of blockade. Next, the British ship was fired upon, and the cannonade was returned. Our readers will remember the sequel; the capture of the town, from the coast up the river; the arrival at Prome; the visit of Lord Dalhousie to Rangoon, in the hope of expediting matters and getting our troops out of the swamps before disease had carried them all off; the driving out of the Burmese from Pegu, and the annexation of the whole province, "in compensation for the past, and for better security for the future." The Governor-General's proclamation disclaimed all intention of interfering further with Burmese territory, as long as the King of Ava should respect the quiet of his neighbours. For some months there was trouble with some predatory bands of Burmese; and the King refused to exchange any further instrument of agreement: but he verbally acknowledged the cession of territory, and engaged to protect Europeans from the attacks of his subjects, and to leave the river

Irrawaddy open for free commerce between the people of both countries.

This is a painful and tedious story; but it must be told, not only because it is the true history of the extension of our empire eastwards, but because it cannot but remind those who accuse the English of territorial rapacity that it is as well to understand the facts before lavishing imputations of that sort. Whether it was possible to obtain peace and a quiet frontier by another method may be a fair subject of controversy: but we cannot imagine that any unprejudiced person could, after learning the facts, declare that this case bears any resemblance to others in which the first move has been made by the ultimate conquerors. The method of more than one of the world's rulers is to introduce discontents among neighbours, to stir up strife, to interpose, to protect, and, finally, to annex. That it was not so with Burmah, our narrative shows. Whether the English could or should have been more patient, more forbearing, more prudent, or in any way more wise, men will judge for themselves: but that the annexation of the provinces beyond the Bay of Bengal was an act of rapacity, no fair-minded observer will ever say.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BEGINNING OF COMPREHENSIVE DOMESTIC
AMELIORATION.

1823,—1835.

“There forth issued from under the altar smoke
A dreadful fiend.”—SPENSER.

“Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.”
TENNYSON.

AFTER long waiting, and many discouragements, the time at length arrived when wars ceased within the peninsula of India, and the energies of its rulers could be devoted to the improvement of the condition of the inhabitants, and the retrieval of the affairs of the Company. There was war in Burmah, as has been seen; but long before Lord Moira's (henceforth to be called Lord Hastings) term of office was over there was such a state of peace from the Himalaya to Ceylon as enabled him to give the crowning grace to his administration by instituting social reforms as important as his military successes were brilliant, and his political scheme definite and successful. The system which was conceived by Clive, professed by Warren Hastings, thoroughly wrought out and largely applied

by Lord Wellesley, so as to be fairly called his own, and reversed for a time by Lord Cornwallis and Sir George Barlow, under orders from Leadenhall-street, was accomplished and firmly established by the Marquis of Hastings. British authority was supreme in India: and not only had it no antagonist for a long course of years, but it availed to prevent warfare among the states of the great peninsula. Reforms, political, social and moral, at once ensued; and they were vigorously continued through three viceregal terms. They may be most clearly apprehended by being surveyed as the harvest of twenty years of peaceful administration, beginning with the close of Lord Hastings' wars, and ending with the resignation of Lord William Bentinck in 1835.

Lord Hastings left the Company's revenue increased by 6,000,000*l.* a year; and a considerable part of the increase was from the land, indicating the improved condition of the people who held it. He was succeeded by Lord Amherst, to whom the post was offered on account of the qualities for public service which he had manifested in his embassy to China. In the interval between the departure of the one and the arrival of the other Governor-General—that is, from January to August, 1823—the authority was wielded by Mr. Adam, the senior member of Council, whose short administration was made memorable by his action against the press in India, to which he believed that Lord

Hastings had given a liberty inconsistent with the preservation of social tranquillity, in a community so anomalous as that of India. He also broke the bondage of the Nizam to the great house of Palmer and Co., for the sake of English honour and the independence of our subsidiary ally. It was done by an advance of money, to enable the Nizam to redeem a tribute for which he had come under obligation to the firm, and by forbidding any further pecuniary transactions between the great firm and the Court of Hyderabad. The interest of the public debt was reduced from 6 to 5 per cent. by Mr. Adam; and he intended to apply the savings from the diminished expenditure to social objects, and especially to the promotion of native education, under the terms of the last charter; but in this he was thwarted by prohibitions from home. After having incurred as much blame and praise as could well be earned in seven months, Mr. Adam made way for—not Mr. Canning, as had been intended, but—Lord Amherst, and died on his way home in 1825.

Lord Amherst had the Burmese war to manage, in the first instance; and the Mahratta and Pindarree wars had left behind them the difficulty dreaded by every pacific Governor-General—an unsettled and unorganized population of soldiers, whom it was scarcely possible to deal with so as to satisfy at once themselves and their neighbours. The reforms already conceived, and even begun, had

not yet checked abuses, or remedied grievances; and there were real causes of disaffection, in the new provinces especially, which gave a most mischievous power to a marauding soldiery at the moment of finding its occupation gone. A vigorous rule was therefore necessary, and almost as much military demonstration as in warlike times. The improved revenue did not meet these calls, and much less the cost of the Burmese war; and a new loan and an increased taxation marked the close of Lord Amherst's term. He left the territory in a peaceable state, with not a single fort standing out, as Bhurtpore long did, against British authority, while the Company's territories were largely increased by the Burmese forfeitures. He won not a little European popularity by ascertaining the fate of the expedition of La Perouse, which had been as much a mystery as that of our Franklin expedition ever was; and he came home in 1828 full of confidence that the reforms inaugurated by his predecessor, and promoted by himself, would retrieve all financial difficulties, if they were but duly taken in hand by his successor. For such an object, the very best choice was made. If our *raj* were really over, as the deluded Sepoys now suppose, and the last Briton were to leave India for ever, tradition would preserve the memory of Lord William Bentinck, in the gratitude of the native population for centuries to come, though he overruled whatever was intolerably mischievous in their notions

and practices as fearlessly as he rebuked any self-seeking and pride on the part of all the Europeans in the country. He had given abundant proof of his ability to oppose native prejudice when Governor of the Madras Presidency, in 1805, when he supported the military commander in outraging the feelings of the Sepoys by changes in their dress—a mistake which he expiated by the immediate loss of his post. He was recalled after the Vellore mutiny; and his appointment to the highest office in India, in 1828, showed the confidence of the authorities at home that his fearlessness as a reformer would not again be spoiled by the inconsiderate rashness which they had rebuked in his earlier days. Every advantage was given to his plan of reforms by the appointment of new governors to all the presidencies at once—Sir John Malcolm going to Bombay, and the Hon. Mr. Lushington to Madras, when Lord William Bentinck assumed his post at Calcutta.

The first impression from Lord W. Bentinck's action was, that his sensibility to unpopularity had by no means increased since he was in India before. He had to carry out into practice various measures already devised and proposed, and to which he therefore pledged himself by accepting office. The most unpopular of these related to a method of retrenchment of military allowances, which excited a fierce outcry from the European officers, and remonstrances which were rebuked from home as approaching too

nearly to insubordination. The truth is the officers were poor, and could ill bear any reduction of allowances which they had learned to consider in the light of regular pay: while the Company was yet poorer, being deep in debt, and under the obligation to retrench in all directions. The Governor-General was in this case the medium through which the communications were sent. On the one hand, he would have been glad if the officers could have been spared the hardship, while on the other, he saw that no retrenchment would ever be accomplished if suggestions were accepted from the parties to be affected by it. Our elderly generation must well remember how large a space in our newspapers was occupied with the tiresome controversy about whole batta, half batta, and other technical matters, from which we gathered only that the Company chose to diminish certain privileges and allowances to their military officers, on the establishment of peace; whereas the officers said they could not live on their pay without those additions. The Duke of Wellington, then in the ministry, supported the Company's authority; and a saving of something less than 20,000*l.* a year was effected. The retrenchments were carried out in the civil departments also, committees of inquiry being employed for several years in seeing how expenditure could be checked. The outcry might have been less passionate if the salaries of civil functionaries of high rank had been reduced in any fair

proportion to those of the humbler military offices. Two millions a year were needed to meet the Company's existing obligations in England. Half a million was saved in the civil, and a million in the military department — not immediately, but prospectively. More income must be obtained by increased production, after economy had done its utmost. Several of the best men in India—among whom was Metcalfe—testified that the plainest and shortest way of obtaining a revenue was to develop the resources of the country by the utmost freedom of trade and colonization; while others—among whom was Malcolm—preferred debt and difficulty to any experiment which should throw open the country to European residents, by whom (they took for granted) the natives would be oppressed and insulted, so that the English would be driven from the country. The events of the day spare the necessity of rebuke or reply. There is probably not an educated man in England who has not been recently revolving the difference between the present state of Bengal and what it would have been if a thorough commercial understanding had been established between the industrial classes of England and Hindostan; and, as for political philosophers, they had warning half a century ago from Sir James Mackintosh, who made no secret of his anticipations from what he saw on the spot. Three years after the Vellore mutiny, he declared his opinion that mutiny was not our greatest danger

in India,¹ but the inevitable results of commercial monopoly. He relied on the diversity of the peoples and the soldiery to control mutiny, but saw that the country could never flourish, to the point of safety, till industry and its rewards were left free. The consolation of the case was, that no false theory could for ever keep down a country so favoured by nature, and that retrieval would always be possible, and certainly speedy at last.*

The Indian government had a strong lesson in the matter of their opium traffic. Various methods of restriction on the growth and sale of opium in Hindostan Proper, where the poppy flourishes most, had been tried; and all were intolerable to the land-owners and cultivators, and worse than useless to the Company, as they resulted merely in a vast system of smuggling. The opium was conveyed to Kurraçhee, and thence to foreign settlements on the coast, whence it was sent to Europe under the Portuguese flag, and sold in the Company's markets. To put an end to spying the land and fighting on the roads—scenes as disgusting as were ever caused by our excise and customs tyranny in England—it was proposed to let the poppy fields and opium sales entirely alone, only requiring the seller to provide himself with a license which would cost less than the expenses and risks of smuggling. Lord W.

* Memoirs of Sir James Mackintosh (1st edition). Vol. I pp. 385–386.

Bentinck adopted this suggestion, and carried it out. The first year, licenses were taken out for less than 1,000 chests; the next year for 7,156 chests; and the amount paid for licenses has increased beyond expectation. If the monopoly was to continue, this was probably the least injurious form it could take.

For ten years before Lord William Bentinck went out there had been discussions and experiments about the landed settlements. Throughout wide regions the zemindars were bankrupt, almost to a man: this was the complaint in one direction. Elsewhere, the cultivators were groaning under the exactions of a new set of landowners. The local agents declared that the quantity of land withdrawn from taxation by forged documents pretending old assignments was beyond belief; and Government had occasion to know, by the state of the revenue, that some trickery of the kind must be going forward. The home authorities ordered the fluctuating system to be adopted in territories pledged to the permanent system; the new North-West Provinces were to be brought under the one system or the other; the Collectors were or were not to have judicial and executive powers in regard to civil and criminal suits; all was in confusion even when Lord Moira went out. He assembled the Collectors in his first journey up the country, and determined on a new survey and assessment, seeing

at once that the ryotwar system could not answer over the wide area of Upper India, and concluding the old village system to be the best, if the derangements of recent years could be rectified, and the injured parties reinstated. Hence arose the Mo-fussil or Provincial Commission, appointed to work in the country, and the Sudder Commission, seated at Calcutta, to receive and adjudicate upon their reports. Great benefits accrued from these proceedings: and the rural inhabitants had begun to confide in the protection of Government before Lord W. Bentinck's entrance upon office. In the Ceded Districts, and in various parts of the Madras Presidency, there were struggles for the establishment of one or another system, or for modifications of either, too frequent and too complicated to be followed here. It must suffice that a very extensive inquiry had produced a mass of materials for new rules and methods of administration. In the Bombay Presidency especially, there was scarcely a field anywhere in the territories acquired from the Mahrattas which was not measured and valued soon after its acquisition. Lord W. Bentinck soon found the necessity of establishing a settled revenue system in the North-West Provinces, to quiet the minds of the population, and encourage their industry; and in January, 1833, he met the chief officers at Allahabad, and presently after sanctioned a scheme by which the villages were surveyed and assessed

by European officers, and the minor divisions confided to native officers, whose decisions were subject to the native method of arbitration. The assessment thus procured was finally settled for a term of thirty years. Speedy judicial decisions and publicity of accounts were provided for; and the people immediately began to rejoice in their security, and the certainty of their circumstances for at least thirty years.⁶ It would be very interesting to look closer into the peasant and village life of Hindostan, as laid open by the materials thus collected; but our space is too small for even the barest record of the other acts of the new Governor-General.

In consequence of Lord Cornwallis's plan of committing the administration of justice, civil and criminal, almost entirely to European agents, the expense of the necessary staff had become unmanageable, while a host of complainants were excluded from justice. The business to be done far exceeded the Company's means of discharging it, if their agents had been, to a man, perfectly qualified in all respects. More and more of the work was committed to native functionaries when it was found that even decisions of an inferior quality were preferable to delays, infrequent gaol deliveries, and the cruel penalties attending a denial of justice; and in 1827 nineteen-twentieths of the civil suits instituted throughout the country were decided by native judges. The consequence was a further extension

of the experiment. The judges were raised in position and emolument, and more work was confided to them; and a Court of Appeal was settled at Allahabad, for the use of litigants, who lived too far from Calcutta to be easily able to apply there. These improvements were among the many which were originated by his predecessors, and only adopted and carried out by Lord William Bentinck. One more item may be added in this connection: By law, all British subjects were competent to serve on juries in India; but custom first, and then law, had pronounced half-castes not to be British subjects. In 1826 a bill was passed which enabled all "good and sufficient residents" to serve on juries, with the limitation that only Christian jurors should sit on the trials of Christians.

One of the first acts of special policy of Lord W. Bentinck's was the abolition of the suttee, or burning of widows — a superstition which his predecessors had discountenanced, but had not felt themselves able to prohibit. The more supervision was instituted, the more frequent the practice became: and more mischief was clearly done by Government recognition than good by suppressing attendant enormities. The new Governor-General thought it safe to try vigorous measures with the spiritless population of Bengal, among whom more than nineteen-twentieths of these sacrifices took place. He would hardly have ventured if there had been reason to suppose the native soldiery deeply

interested in the matter ; but most of the Sepoys came from districts where the rite was least insisted on ; their wives were not wont to be with them in cantonments ; and it was thought sufficient to avoid using their services in the suppression. The police were charged with the enforcement of the new law, which treated as felony all participation in the sacrifice of human life by the burning or burying alive of women ; and they had but little to do. After a few attempts at stolen meetings, very like those of “ the ring ” in English counties, the Hindoos of Bengal gave the matter up ; and the prohibition was extended to the other presidencies without any difficulty. Opposing appeals were made to the home authorities by Hindoos who approved and disapproved the measure ; and the petition of the latter was regularly argued before the Privy Council in 1832, and dismissed. The abolition was by no means so general as was at first concluded. It related to only 37,000,000 out of the 77,000,000 of India of that day. It indirectly affected about 19,000,000 more, in the subsidiary States over which we had most influence ; but 21,000,000 remained entirely unaffected by it. It is impossible to say how far the sullenness of the disappointed Brahmins may have aggravated ill feelings from other causes during the interval ; but, on the other hand, several native princes have proscribed the custom because the General Government did so with success.

The difficult question of the introduction of

Christianity into India was warmly and widely discussed at this time. By the charter of 1813 missionaries were permitted to go to India—a measure about which there could have scarcely been two opinions if the country had been hitherto open to settlement by all who chose to go. As it was, the question was surrounded with difficulties, then as it is now. The points on which rational people were agreed were that extreme ignorance and presumption in the missionaries who went out at the beginning of the century had produced deadly effects, not only by aiding the disaffection at Vellore, but by discrediting the profession of Christianity by more enlightened and less egotistical persons. All agreed that the Company were pledged not to interfere with the religion of their subjects, whatever it might be; and all the Company's most trusted officers on the spot declared that missionary efforts among either Hindoos or Mohammedans would put a stop to the improvements, material and moral, in the condition of the people, which were becoming very marked. There seem to have been few, however, who perceived that the conversion of the Mussulman to Christianity is almost as impossible as that of the genuine Jew; and that the conversion of Hindoos had thus far been, and was likely to continue, a mere conformity from the sense of duty and fitness in their relation to their European superiors. But, over and above all this, there

were Christians in India to the number of many thousands; and they needed a clergy, and justified an episcopate. At first it was proposed to have four bishops, for the three presidencies and Ceylon; but the charter of 1813 provided for one, who should occupy the see of Calcutta, and act as archdeacon at the other presidencies. Bishop Middleton went out, as the first bishop, in 1814. He found he had only thirty-two clergy under him; and they were, in fact, military chaplains, over whom he held a divided authority. They were widely scattered; with no parishes, and many of them no churches; and the few who were settled at civil stations were as much under civil as their moveable brethren were under military control. He did the best he could under such unfavourable circumstances, causing new churches to be built, and congregations formed, and establishing some degree of order and communion among the European Christians in different parts of the country. Under his sanction the Missionary College of Calcutta was founded, for the instruction of natives and others for the offices of preaching, catechising, and school tuition, and for the aid and encouragement of missionary labours in general. Bishop Middleton died in 1822, and was succeeded by the beloved Reginald Heber. According to testimony from all quarters, great and increasing surprise was caused by the ill-success of all missionary efforts in India. Vast sums were

expended, and more and more missionaries were sent out; and, still it was very rarely that the hope of the conversion of an individual could be entertained: and when it was, disappointment almost invariably ensued. It is easy to see now that the whole development and training of the mind of Asiatics of any religion were so entirely different from the European, and especially the British, that it was impossible for the two to obtain the same point of view. Through all that is said, and very truly, of the difficulty of dealing with such an institution as that of caste, and with other obstacles, the fundamental truth is that the unprepared mind, whether Hindoo or Mussulman, developed under Asiatic conditions, cannot be in sympathy, more or less, intellectually or morally, with the Christianised European mind. The only true method is now, for the most part, agreed on: the natives must pass through a great process of secular education—that of life under improved conditions—before it can embrace any new dogmatic system. Lord William Bentinck and his immediate predecessors were faithful representatives of the views of their employers in this respect, being devoted to the work of native education, as the only genuine preparation for religious conversion. Before Lord Hastings went home, the missionaries applied their services to the Christians at the presidencies, instead of the hopeless task of

converting Brahmins and Mohammedans; and when they did attack the hostile faiths, it was chiefly by means of schools, in which improved views and principles were to be conveyed in the form of literature. Many trials were made of English schools, as a higher stage to be reached through those in which the native languages were employed; but the attempt created mistrust, till the British at Calcutta offered to deliver over an English college there to the management of enlightened Hindoos. The thing was done; and thus arose the English College of Calcutta. Lord W. Bentinck carried on with zeal all such schemes; and he originated many more. New schools and classes were encouraged all over the country. The best superintendence and stimulus were given to the native institutions; but the Governor-General's earnest desire was that the English language and literature should be the medium through which the native mind and destiny should be elevated in all directions. He proved, clearly enough, the happy consequences which would ensue; but he overlooked the impracticable character of the enterprise on which he wasted a great deal of virtuous effort. Bishop Heber died too soon to effect much beyond establishing a strong interest between the English public and that of Hindostan. We shall even yet make more use than we have made of the disclosures of the life of India offered in his Journals.

Lord W. Bentinck completed the extirpation of Thuggery, or the strangling of travellers for booty, by a special sect of divergent Mohammedans. By taking no notice of the railings of the press he left it practically free, though the re-imposed restrictions remained unrepealed. The people say the press was free in his time; and it was so for all practical purposes. In his time some important public works went on, especially some embankments of the Cauvery, by which a sufficient area was made fertile to have served as a lesson to all existing and future authorities as to how to prevent famine, and secure the material welfare of the inhabitants. The new provinces across the bay, and especially Arracan, were becoming so productive, under the influences of peace, as to afford hopes of universal food and an extending commerce. If space allowed, we might trace the footsteps of advancing civilization over the whole peninsula prior to the great famine of 1837; but it must suffice to say that when the commercial function of the Company ceased, under the charter of 1833, there was every encouragement to believe that through such rulers as Lord W. Bentinck, they might make their rule as remarkable under the pacific *régime* of a later time as their commercial enterprise had been in the old days, when the factor was a brave adventurer first, and next an *impromptu* soldier, ready to turn statesman when necessity required.

It is under the head of social amelioration that it seems right to notice a region of our Indian empire which has hardly yet come into view. Ceylon was at this time the most effectually improved part of our eastern dominion; and some of the most effectual improvements took place while Lord William Bentinck was at Calcutta, though not exactly in consequence of his rule. For many years before, Ceylon had been virtually governed by the Ministry, and not by the India Company; and it remains so at this day: but in a historical survey, its improvements should be credited to the period in which they occurred.

After passing under the rule of the Portuguese, and then of the Dutch, and being fought for by all parties in all the European wars carried on in the eastern seas, Ceylon became ours at the peace of Amiens, remaining under the rule of its own kings, till 1815, when the chiefs of the island invited the British to annex it to their dominions, because the tyranny of the reigning king had become intolerable. Nothing but misrule could spoil such a country as Ceylon, with its natural gifts and graces, and its boundless power for the production of wealth. Besides the ordinary treasures of the sea, pearls and pearl-shells abounded within reach of its shores; and cinnamon and other spices, with all tropical agricultural products were obtainable to any amount. But the people, chiefly Buddhists, with some Hindoos

(worshippers of Siva, however) to the north, were priest-ridden; and their apathy and ignorance made them the mere victims of a sovereign who was more like a fiend than a man. The change within a few years after their welfare was fairly taken in hand by the British was remarkable. The benevolent Sir Alexander Johnston, Chief-Justice there in 1811, introduced trial by jury, in the face of much mockery and evil boding; and it answered beyond all expectation. In rapid succession other ameliorations took place. Slavery was abolished; the monopolies by which a once prodigious commerce had been reduced to almost nothing, were repealed; and the people were relieved from labour-taxes and other oppressions which had deeply aggravated their constitutional apathy. A field so circumscribed, and so abounding in natural promise, drew missionaries from Europe and America; and those of the United States were distinguished above all others by conspicuous success. Sir Alexander Johnston always used to say that they succeeded by means of the sound sense with which they enlisted native self-interest first in works of industry, creating a civilization which opened the way for religion. Altogether, the prospect was most cheering in Lord William Bentinck's time. Ceylon was ruled by a Governor, assisted by two councils—legislative and executive. More and more natives were entering the lower offices of the government: justice was made easily accessible: a police, on the English

principle, pervaded the country, and the low proportion of crime was remarkable. The people adopted the practice of vaccination, with sufficient readiness, and they deposited largely in the Savings Bank. In a short time after the opening of the Savings Bank at Columbo, it paid off a Government loan of 2,000*l.*, leaving a surplus in its treasury. Agriculture and commerce flourished under the partial emancipation of labour and trade; new roads were opened, and British capital and skill began to flow in. The population was then somewhat under a million and a quarter, or rather more than 46 to the square mile. The total number of schools, government and private, civil and military, was above 1,000, of which 63 were Roman Catholic.

It is true that there was a sad revulsion in store, fifteen years later, when the imposition of impracticable taxes by an ill-judging Government was to induce the rebellion of an unarmed multitude, and to injure the British name and authority accordingly: but it would not the less be wrong to pass over the reviving impulse given, at the time I am treating of, to an agriculture which once sufficed to support a dense population over a wide surface since lapsed to jungle and swamp, and to a commerce which in ancient days rivalled that of the most flourishing ports in Asia. In 1835 there was every reason to believe that Ceylon might be retrieved from its long lapse, and elevated to a higher civilization than its proudest traditions had ever pretended.

CHAPTER XIX.

BEGINNING OF AN EXTERNAL POLICY.

1835—1842.

“Be not over-exquisite
To shape the fashion of uncertain evils.”—MILTON.

“It is said that the Persian army went as far as that: but no one knows what became of it afterwards, unless it be the Ammonites, and those whom they told. The only certain thing is that it did not go as far as Ammon, and that it never returned to Egypt. Thus perished that army.”—HERODOTUS.

“Le plus grand défaut de la pénétration n'est pas, de n'aller point jusqu'au but; c'est de le passer.”—LA ROCHEFOUCAULD.

THE commercial character of the Company, much restricted in 1813, was extinguished by the next Charter, in 1833. From April, 1834, this great association dropped entirely the venerable title by which it became known in the history of England—that of a Company of British Merchants trading to the East. Henceforth they were to be simply, *the East India Company*. Even their tea trade was given up, and all the commercial property of the Company sold. Their real capital was estimated at 21,000,000*l.*; their dividends were guaranteed by the Act to the amount of 630,000*l.*, or 10½ per cent. on a nominal capital of 6,000,000*l.*; these dividends were

chargeable on the revenues of India, and redeemable by Parliament in 1874. India was thrown open for settlement quite freely; natives and emigrants had henceforth professedly equal claim to office and employment, and there was to be no distinction on account of race, colour, or religion. Great hopes were founded on these provisions by all who were unaware of the bottomless chasm which yawns between the interior nature of the Asiatic and the European races; and even the most cautious trusted that the genuine and permanent civilization of India was at length provided for. As for the commercial effects of the Charter, they were clear enough. Within ten years the trade with China doubled, and the value of British exports to India and Ceylon increased from two millions and a half to six millions and nearly half. How it was that one portion of the new arrangements worked so well and others not at all, was a subject of earnest speculation when the Charter was renewed in 1853, and during the intervening twenty years. It was stated in Parliament that not one native had obtained an office after 1833 who could not as well have held it before; and the reply to this was not a contradiction, but a statement of the number of natives employed as judges, deputy-collectors, and deputy-registrars. The main fact in defence was that 96 per cent. of causes were adjudicated on by native functionaries; and this was met by allegations of the extreme badness of the decisions thus

awarded, Those who judged by the average amount of peasant income declared the people to be in a state of fearful destitution, while, on the other hand, the increase in the imports of articles of popular consumption was pointed out as the best proof of a rising condition. There had been a famine in Hindostan Proper in 1837 so fearful that the British residents at Agra and Cawnpore could not take their evening drive, on account of the smell of corpses too numerous for burial; and cholera and smallpox followed, sweeping away a multitude who had outlived the dearth. This was not necessarily a proof of general poverty; and those who called it an accident declared that it would not happen again; for that our new provinces, on the Burmah side, would henceforth be the granaries of rice-eating India; and that the prodigious effects of irrigation, wherever restored (as in some parts of the Deccan), showed that the fate of India, in regard to food, was wholly in the hands of its rulers. This was universally felt to be true; and the natural consequence was an influx of petitions from natives for the vigorous prosecution of public works. Still, amidst much material improvement and external agreement about the means of more, the European and Asiatic races drew no nearer to each other in mind and heart. Much was said, in a kindly spirit and in eloquent language, in the parliamentary debates on the charter of 1853, about the progress of education, the increase of churches,

and the means of moral and religious sympathy and advancement; but yet these were all only means; and no one could show that the end was attained. This is a matter which calls for no exposition now. An extinguisher is put upon all arguments, *pro* and *con*. We know now that for one hundred years daily prayers have been uttered in Mussulman worship for the Mogul rulers and their restoration, and that a vast multitude of those whom we were striving to raise to a condition of fellow-citizenship with ourselves, have only been waiting for the expiration of our century to turn us—not only out of their country, but out of the world. Meantime, what the petitioners professed to want was a great purification in the administration of justice; a rectification in the land tenures; and a vigorous prosecution of public works. All these were discussed in the session of 1853, and the new Charter then voted accomplished some considerable changes.

It was seriously debated whether to preserve the Double Government—few pretending to say that it had worked well, but at best doubting whether any other arrangement would work better. “The Company” was declared to have become a mere fiction; and the Board of Directors to be a blind behind which the general Government really ruled India. Those who desired to have the Queen at once proclaimed in every town in India, and to have a new Secretary of State for Indian affairs, did not obtain

their desire: but the number of Directors was reduced from thirty to eighteen, of whom six were eventually to be nominated by the Crown, while half of the twelve elected by the Directors themselves must have served ten years in India. An English Commission was appointed to promote good law and a good administration of it in India; and several minor provisions were made, suitable to the more marked political character of the Company. We have since seen great changes made in regard to Indian patronage—civil offices being thrown open to competition, and admission to military training being made more easily attainable. The exclusive East India College at Haileybury is to be closed; and thus was one after another of the characteristics of the great Company passing away. Something had happened in the interval between the two last Charters which had indeed brought the Company into very close relations with the politics of the empire at large. A great European controversy had been contested in their name, on their territory, and at their expense. In the debate on the new Charter, in 1853, the Directors declared their finances to be in a better condition than appeared from the figures, because 15,000,000*l.* of recent expenditure had been incurred for a war which was not Indian but European. On the last occasion of a new Charter, the Company's debt was 38,000,000*l.*; it was now (twenty years later) 53,000,000*l.*; but the

existing balances were so much larger than on the former occasion, that the great wars of the interval—those of Burmah, Affghanistan, and Scinde—had in fact caused an increase of less than eight millions and a half, though the Affghan war had cost fifteen. The difference might be taken as a fair measure of the improvement in Indian finance. Thus it appeared that the time had arrived, predicted by Mackintosh, and by many before and after him, when the chief danger of our Indian empire would appear to be from a foreign foe: for this alone could be the meaning of a European war being carried on in India. It was even so, as all our readers well know. Few of them can have forgotten the Affghan war; but some may be unaware of its relations with our empire, east and west; and our review of British life in India would be unnecessarily defective if we omitted to sketch a group of events so remarkable in themselves, so suggestive of change, and so clearly exhibiting a new phase in Indian Government.

There is an old Eastern proverb, that no one can be King of Hindostan without being first Lord of Cabul. Yet, when Lord W. Bentinck came home in 1835, and Lord Auckland went out to succeed him, the English held Hindostan, as far as the desert frontier which extended from the Hill States of Ghurwal (which Simla and other summer stations render familiar to English imaginations) to the sea, without having ever been lords of Cabul. Alexander

had gone by way of Cabul to India, after taking Herat, near the borders of Persia; and Tamerlane conquered it on his route to the Ganges, and Baber in his descent upon Delhi, where he set up his throne. Sultan Mahmoud made Ghuznee, in the same region, his basis of operations in founding the Mohammedan empire in India. It was natural for the natives of India to speculate on our not being lords of Cabul, seeing that we were masters of Hindoostan: but the English at home, who are not too well-informed in regard to Asiatic traditions, might easily wonder, any time within twenty years, what business we had at Cabul. How did we become involved in an Affghan war, which cost us a deluge of blood and tears, of which the loss of fifteen millions of treasure is only the bare material record? It is a problem not to be solved in this place how such a war could be instituted, against the will of the Company, just after the Company had been left with a territorial function alone. Its sole business after April, 1834, was to manage the political and administrative affairs of India: and yet a course of political action was entered on presently after which was disapproved by the Company from first to last. In their own words, it was a European conflict carried on on their territory, and at the expense mainly of their subjects. The only possible answer to the question why they allowed it is, that they could not help it. What was this strong compulsion? A few glances round the scene may help to account for it.

It will be remembered that there was an alarm in 1808 about invasion from the north-west while Napoleon and Alexander of Russia were friends, and Turkey their tool, and Persia waiting their commands. Metcalfe was sent to the Punjaub, and Elphinstone to Cabul, to prepare alliances in preparation for such an attack. Through all subsequent changes, when Napoleon and Alexander were in their graves, the alarm of an invasion in Asia by our European foes or rivals was occasionally revived; and it was particularly strong when Lord Auckland went out to India. In Persia, our envoy, Mr. Ellis, found in 1835 that the young monarch whom we had seated in peace on his throne was the humble servant of the Czar Nicholas, instead of the friend of England. He was going to besiege Herat, for which he might or might not have good reason; but he was going further than Herat, intending to claim Ghuznee and Candahar; and if he obtained them, he would be very near the Punjaub; and nothing else lay between him and us. The conclusion in England was that it was as the Czar's pioneer that the Shah was thus penetrating eastwards; and it was anticipated that, in a very short time, Russian consular agents would be settled in all the great towns up to the frontier of the Punjaub. At the same time, the Affghan rulers—a set of turbulent princes, always at feud among themselves—were afraid of Runjeet Singh, our Sikh ally, and promised aid to Persia, and also to Russia, in return for support against their

neighbours at Lahore. This combination really was alarming, and the British envoy reasonably desired to see peace made between the Herat sovereign and the Shah. Terms were offered on the side of Herat; but the Shah marched on to the siege instead of accepting them. It has been a matter of dispute to this day whether Russia encouraged or discouraged the Shah in this course. The Czar declared that he had always openly disapproved it: while there was a great amount of testimony that Russian agents were everywhere busy in obtaining aid for the Persian enterprise, and spreading reports of a great Russian reinforcement being on the march to join the Shah's army. Herat was besieged under the guidance of Russian officers; and it was defended by the help of an English officer—Lieut. Pottinger, who so enabled the place to hold out as to baffle the Shah, and compel him, at the end of ten months, to raise the siege, and turn homewards. The policy of Europe was in truth represented in little at that spot at the foot of the Affghan mountains; the real conflict was between the aggressive Russian officers managing the siege without, with their 40,000 Persians and 80 cannon, and the gallant and vigilant Pottinger within, who was managing the defence as if the fate of India hung on his making the crumbling walls, and the hungry people, and the tired garrison hold out till the Shah should give up the game. And if there were busy Russians stirring up the towns against the

kings of Hindostan, lest they should become lords of Cabul, there were also adventurous Englishmen, wandering in strange places, each charged with a mission relating to the same controversy. Lieut. Wyburd was winning his way to Khiva in 1835, to see what the Khan there knew of the reported army of Russians, and to obtain his good-will on the English side. Colonel Stoddart presented himself to Pottinger at Herat, and was so deep in the interest of the case as to be ready to try another formidable journey, as perilous as Wyburd's. He learned at Bokhara that Wyburd had been murdered very early in his mission. Captain Conolly followed Wyburd's track, and then joined Stoddart at Bokhara, where they were beheaded together in 1843, after enduring a long and loathsome imprisonment. These were the first fruits of the policy of going out into the wilderness to meet a rumoured foe, instead of awaiting his possible attack in a well guarded position at home. Thus were the scouts cut off at once, who would have done good service in watch and ward within the camp.

Pottinger's defence of Herat was a piece of individual gallantry; and the three envoys who were sent wandering into Central Asia had each a particular and speculative mission. There must be besides a new seat of diplomacy between the Persian territory and our own; and advantage was taken of overtures from Cabul to establish a mission there. Dost

Mohammed, the ruler of Cabul, applied to all parties at once, in his dread of Runjeet Singh—to Lord Auckland as well as the Czar and the Shah; and the Governor-General at once sent Captain Burnes, who arrived at Cabul while the Persians were on their march to Herat. Burnes's mission had avowedly a commercial object; but he found a Persian competitor so busy at Candahar in showing the Affghans how much better the Russian and Persian alliance was for them than the British, that he declared the British could not stand their ground but by entering into a political rivalry. On no better security than the opinion of Burnes and the sincerity of Dost Mohammed, the very serious step was taken of investing our envoy with political powers, and entering into a competition with Russia, involving the India Company in a policy which they wholly disapproved, and costing the English nation dearer than any conceivable consequences which could have arisen from leaving it to Russia to get to India if she could, across the snows and the sands, the frosts and the heats, the parched plains and the impracticable defiles which an army must struggle through before reaching our frontier, and meeting a fresh army face to face. As it was, we lost an entire army without having encountered a Russian.

Whilst Burnes was at Cabul, sending a series of "startling disclosures" to Calcutta, and while the Governor-General continued to be startled in due

response, two successive ambassadors at St. Petersburg, Lords Durham and Clanricarde, were satisfied that Russia was not at that time thinking of invading India, and the Russian ambassador in London convinced Lord Palmerston of the same thing. The Czar even changed his official agents in the East at our desire, and, as we have seen, Herat was not taken by the Persians; yet was an act ventured upon at Calcutta which must have appeared rash even if a hostile army had been in full march upon our frontier. In October, 1838, the Governor-General issued a proclamation to the Bengal division of the troops then at Simla, explaining our difficulty with Persia, complaining of the conduct of Dost Mohammed towards our ally, Runjeet Singh, and announcing the intention of the Company's government to depose the rulers of Cabul and Candahar, as belonging to a usurping race, and to seat a rival claimant, Shah Soojah, on the throne. Everybody in England, and most people in India, asked who was Shah Soojah, and what business we had to do more than fulfil the terms of our alliance with Runjeet Singh. The very feuds about the succession among the Affghan princes so weakened their states that we might advantageously have left them to their own disputes; whereas, at the moment when they were least likely to make war upon us we involved ourselves in their quarrels, for the sake of setting up a prince who

would be thereby bound to keep the peace towards us. After one of the princes had seen his fine province of Cashmere annexed to the Punjaub under Runjeet Singh, and Peshawur reduced to the rank of a vassal city, while another saw Balkh incorporated with Bokhara, and next, Scinde declared independent under its own Ameers, it was a most unnecessary act for us to interfere; but the fact was, a panic had possessed the Calcutta government and its agents in the north-west; and they saw the Russian hosts approaching through every medium of circumstance. If the Affghan princes were strong and united, they would overwhelm Runjeet Singh, and give a passage to the Russians: and if they were weak, they would be no defence against the Russians: so Shah Soojah was set up as the English tool, at all risks. British troops were to accompany his soldiery to Cabul, to ensure his accession, and were to retire when he should be firmly seated. Thus it was, that we had a British army in Affghanistan. It was an imposing force when Lord Auckland and Runjeet Singh met at Ferozepore in November, 1838, and the greeting of the allied potentates was a really splendid spectacle, so magnificent were their retinues and soldiery; but when it was known that the Shah was retreating from Herat, the Bengal force was at once considerably reduced. A strong body of Bombay troops marched through Scinde, according to treaty; but

they met with such treatment there that it was necessary to bring more to keep all safe in our rear, and to establish a permanent force in the country at the expense of the Ameers. Thus were our obligations and liabilities increasing with every step we took in an anticipatory policy with regard to Russia.

The rest of the dreary story may be very briefly told; for everybody knows it whose memory can carry him 15 years back. The Bombay force had to fight its way up through Scinde, and Shah Soojah's army marched down the Indus to meet it. The Belooches saw from their hill stations what was going on, and of course disapproved of their new neighbours, making use of their opportunity to damage and despoil the invaders. It was March: and in the jungly plains the soldiers were struck down by the heat, while in the mountains the snow blinded them by driving in their faces. The enemy dammed up the rivers, so as to let out a deluge where the invaders were coming; and the Belooches hovered in flank and rear, carrying off camels, stores, and stragglers. One of the princes was negotiating with the British Political Agent at the very moment when he was sending his bands into the Bolan pass, to make the passage through it a mere running the gauntlet. Our soldiers emerged from it without tents, camels, baggage, or food, so that the camp-followers fought for the carcases of the horses which fell dead on the

road. Our officers, in their despatches, said that this march had no parallel but the retreat from Moscow ; and Shah Soojah's force was reduced from 6,000 to 1,500 men. He entered Candahar without opposition, and Sir John (afterwards Lord) Keane took Ghuznee for him with great skill and hardihood. When Dost Mohammed heard that it had fallen, and that his son was a prisoner in the hands of the English, he withdrew to Bokhara, and left Cabul open to his rival, who entered it on the 7th of August 1839.

The work was supposed to be now achieved, though many a warning reached the managers of this policy that they had better not feel secure. There were well-disposed men in Cabul itself who offered secret intelligence that plots were hatching against us : but Burnes (now Sir Alexander), through whom Lord Auckland received his intelligence, would listen to nothing which did not corroborate his sanguine hopes ; and Sir William M'Naghten, the new Political Resident, was for a time equally delighted with our happy lodgment at Cabul. Sir J. Keane carried away too many soldiers, while a crowd of women and children congregated at the new station. Burnes encouraged everybody to come, and garden as he did, and cultivate the pleasant people he lived amongst. As soon as the Bengal and Bombay forces were in great part gone home, the popular hatred of the imposed sovereign began to appear, and in the dreaded form of threats to appeal to Russia. The

Affghans showed us that we had been virtually inviting the Russians by our precipitancy in forestalling them. The Czar did in fact declare war against Khiva towards the close of the year, on the ostensible ground of aggressions by the Khiva people. It was in that winter that the Russian army was lost in the snow, and by famine and pestilence, only a few stragglers returning to tell the Czar how difficult a matter it was to march in the direction of India—at once a lesson for him and a rebuke to us.

After a time, Dost Mohammed surrendered, by quietly walking into the British camp, and placing himself at the disposal of the authorities. We, in England, heard of him as the ornament of the parties at Government House, and as playing chess with the Governor-General's sister. Whatever he might be at chess, he was very able at a deeper game.

In April, 1841, General Elphinstone, aged and infirm, was put in command of the troops in Affghanistan. He saw nothing wrong, though the hill-tribe of the Ghilzees was at that time sworn to avenge on the British the death of a chief besieged and killed by misadventure. Five thousand of their warriors were watching their opportunity from day to day. Major Pottinger, arriving from Calcutta in May, saw at once that the British force was far too weak, though Lord Auckland had just ventured to offend the native chiefs by reducing their allowances, as if we stood in no need of their good-will. Already

the Punjaub had broken down behind us. Runjeet Singh died in 1839, and in a few months his two next heirs were dead; one by poison, if the general belief is well-founded, and the other by the fall of a beam as he was passing under a gateway on his camel. The consequent disputes about the succession made the Punjaub a new scene of anxiety, instead of the sure refuge which we had considered it. Again, no small sensation was excited at Cabul when the news came that the Peel and Aberdeen ministry had caused the recal of Lord Auckland, and the despatch of Lord Ellenborough to fill his place. Would the Auckland policy be sustained by Lord Ellenborough? His course was prepared by events.

After an anxious summer, during which the gathering of the storm was watched by the wise and made a jest of by the sanguine, the day of doom was drawing near. The best officers were the most depressed, because most aware of the necessity of good command under the approaching crisis, and of the utter imbecility of their commander. They did not know the whole truth—the native scheme that the British should be apparently allowed to return to India; but that only one should be left alive—to sit, deprived of his limbs, at the entrance of the pass, with a letter in his teeth, declaring him to be the one survivor of the British in Affghanistan. Our readers remember how nearly this came true; how the garrison of Jellalabad saw a single horseman

approach, reeling in his saddle, and how he told them that he alone had escaped to tell the fate of his countrymen and countrywomen. More were afterwards recovered; but it was a lost expedition; and it occupies its place in history as one of the great catastrophes of nations. The gay and confident Burnes had no misgivings till the Cabul rabble stormed his house on the 3rd of November, and shot him and his brother in their own balcony. The careworn M^r Naghten said in December, that a thousand deaths would be better than the hell of anxiety he had been living in for six weeks; and on the 23rd he was murdered, and his head and green spectacles made a plaything of by the soldiers of Akbar Khan, Dost Mohammed's second son.

The British, half-starved and without ammunition, looking in vain for help from below and behind, and distant a mile and a half from the citadel, which should have been their grand bulwark, were "advised" by the enemy to go back to India; and on the 6th of January, 1842, they set out. Their doom was clear before five miles were over. Of the 4,500 soldiers, 12,000 camp followers, and a great body of women and children, only one individual accomplished the march. At the first halt, they saw the glare from their burning cantonments as they sat in the snow. The women were pillaged of everything but the scanty clothing they wore; the children were lost in the hubbub; and the snow was

soaked with the blood and strewn with the corpses of our soldiers till, there was not one left. The camp followers, frost-bitten and benumbed, lay down in the road, or crawled among the rocks, to die of cold and hunger.

The generals did not appear, because they were obstructed below, and had enough to do to save our military reputation. That reputation *was* saved, the errors of the Affghanistan war being attributed to the weakness of civilians, who laid themselves open to irresponsible military importunities. Large reinforcements were sent, and able commanders found means to get them through the passes. General Pollock for the first time in history proved that the Khyber pass can be traversed in the face of an enemy, and relieved the gallant Sale after his heroic defence of Jellalabad. General Nott came up from Candahar, victorious, though the reinforcements sent could not reach him. A considerable number of women, children, and wounded or isolated officers were recovered; our flag was planted on the citadel at Cabul, and the bazaar—a work of Aurungzebe's—was burned. General Elphinstone died in captivity before things took this turn; and Shah Soojah was murdered near his own capital—to be succeeded presently by Dost Mohammed—relieved of his fears in all directions.

Lord Ellenborough by proclamation commanded the evacuation of Affghanistan declaring, to the

astonishment of the Affghans, that it is contrary to British principles and policy to force a ruler on a reluctant people. It was for the Affghans and all India to argue whether the British were perfidious, or simply infirm; and we are now suffering the practical consequences of the speculation.

CHAPTER XX.

BULWARKS OF AN EXTERNAL POLICY.

1830—1856.

"For to think that a handful of people can, with the greatest courage and policy in the world, embrace too large extent of dominion, it may hold for a time, but will fail suddenly."—BACON.

"In the garden more grows than the gardener sows."—*Proverb.*

"Is this the promised end?"—*LEAR.*

IN the slight mention made of Scinde in our review of the Affghan war, it was plain that the most disastrous complications may arise, and are almost sure to arise, when once aggressive measures against a foreign state are undertaken for precautionary purposes. Our Bombay forces, we have seen, had to fight their way up the Indus, and then through the Beloochees, before meeting their ostensible enemy in Affghanistan. The conquest and annexation of Scinde and the Punjaub were inevitable consequences of the Affghan war, though Lord Auckland would no doubt have recoiled from the charge of so flagrantly violating the orders and the professions of both halves of the double government at home by so vast an extension of their Indian

Empire. Sir Charles Napier always called the conquest of Scinde “the tail of the Affghan war;” and there was presently nobody to deny that it was so.

Before that unhappy speculation, our authority and influence extended to the Sutlej. We had alliances beyond it; but it was our true boundary. A line of three states had intervened between us and the mountaineers beyond the Indus; Cashmere, lying among the sources of the Five Rivers; the Punjaub, through which they flowed and converged; and Scinde, through which they ran to the sea after uniting to form the Indus. Cashmere had belonged to Cabul, but was easily obtained by Runjeet Singh, and annexed to the Punjaub in 1819. With the other two states we had treaties of alliance. Our relations with Runjeet Singh have been described. Those with Scinde were less simple and stable.

Scinde was the scene of successive barbaric invasions and tyrannies from the time it was first known to the British till fifteen years ago. While it was under the rule of a tribe of military fanatics from Persia, who established themselves there in the beginning of the last century, the English first gained a footing in Scinde, planting a factory at Tatta, in the delta of the Indus, in 1775. Broils and troubles among the inhabitants rendered the establishment precarious. Sometimes it was suspended for years, and then restored, while changes of dynasty went on; but when our envys at Lahore and Cabul obtained

royal favour could carry them. The Ameers sent them dinners of seventy-two dishes, all served in silver; but the poverty of the country was extreme nevertheless. For hundreds of miles there was not even a ferry-boat, and the natives crossed the stream each on his bundle of reeds. This was in 1831. A Beloochee soldier told Burnes that all was over, now that the English had seen their river; and he was not the only one who expressed the same fear. More treaties followed, and double ones as new cliques of princes divided the empire; and in 1832 we began to have specific rights in Scinde. We might use the Indus freely for commerce, but no vessel of war, was to enter it. No merchant was to settle in Scinde, and travellers must have passports. A tariff was to be granted by the princes, whose officers were to abide by it; and the princes engaged to alter it if it proved objectionable, and to help to put down the border robbers of Cutch. The tariff and tolls were settled by another treaty in 1834, and Colonel Pottinger was appointed Political Agent for Scinde. The tolls were to be taken (not on goods, but on vessels) only at the mouth of the Indus; and the produce was to be divided among the powers whose territory bordered the river; viz., the British, the Ameers, Runjeet Singh, and a tributary prince whose lands lay between the Sutlej and the Indus. In a few months more a steamboat was navigating the Indus, the property of a Mogul merchant at Bombay.

Throughout the districts of our cotton manufacture, and among the abolitionists of the United States, there were great rejoicings over that steamboat; but the anticipations of a good supply of cotton down that channel have not as yet been fulfilled, though there is every reason for hope that they will be. It was Lord Auckland's policy that intercepted that benefit as so many others. There is "a law of storms" in politics as in natural philosophy; and in this case, among the wrecks on the verge of the tornado was Scinde. From the time when Lord Auckland conceived his anti-Russian policy, he desired to use as his tools the allies who lay between his dominions and Cabul; and the ruin of Scinde as an independent state was the consequence—a consequence, we must add, anything but disastrous to the inhabitants at large, whose condition could scarcely be worse than it was when the British entered the country.

Runject Singh quarrelled with the Ameers, and threatened invasion, requiring of the Calcutta Government a supply of arms to be sent up the Indus: This was rendered impossible by the treaty; but Lord Auckland used the opportunity to obtain such a footing in Scinde that it could be made the base of operations in the Cabul invasion, when it was determined to use the Bolan pass in preference to the Khyber. The Ameers employed their utmost endeavours to send Shah Soojah to Cabul by the Khyber pass; and, failing, the march of the Shah's

troops and the British was made as difficult and destructive as we have seen. The treaty was broken through on all hands. The Ameers had violated its commercial conditions; and now Lord Auckland brought his armament up the Indus. All pretence of cordial alliance was at an end, and a subsidiary force was to be stationed in Scinde, at the expense of the Ameers. The town of Bukkur was given up, and Upper Scinde was admitted by the princes to be a British dependency. The Calcutta Government promised to defend Scinde from foreign aggression, and to keep down internal feuds; and the princes engaged to support the necessary British force, and harbour their military stores; to restrain the Beloochee chiefs; to have no political dealings unknown to the British Resident, the same engagement being taken on the other side; to abolish the tolls on the Indus; to pay 200,000*l.*; and to furnish a contingent for the Affghan war, if required. In order to humble the Ameers sufficiently, this treaty was made in as many copies as there were Ameers, the copies slightly varying from each other, so that no acknowledgment was made of any head ruler in Scinde. This transaction happened in 1839. The misfortune of the case was that the policy of Lord Auckland left no option to his successor. It was too late now to restore Scinde to the Ameers; and no Governor-General who had been made aware of the vices of their rule, and the miseries of their people, could

desire it: but the only alternative was between withdrawing from Scinde altogether and making it British territory. To Sir Charles Napier the work was assigned. As a military achievement, his conquest of Scinde was eminently brilliant; but his professional exploit was presently eclipsed by his own merits as an administrator. His advent and his rule were blessed at length by all Scindians, except the profligate and treacherous Ameers, who alone have been sufferers by the annexation of Scinde to the territories of the Company.

Sir Charles Napier was ordered to Scinde by Lord Ellenborough immediately on the new Governor-General's assumption of power. He was directed to assume entire control, civil and military, there and in Beloochistan. He did so in September, 1842. His first office seems to have been that of Censor-General, so clear were his own aims, and so far did he find all parties out of the way of them. After a grand reception by the Ameers, he let them know in writing that he was aware of their double dealing, and of the traitorous hopes which were at the bottom of their delays and pretences. He rebuked the mode of living of the British Political Residents, whose pomp could not be sustained but at heavy cost to the people of the country: and he discovered that, here elsewhere, grievous tyranny was imputable to five officials, who cared less for the welfare of the inhabitants than for their own credit with their supe-

riors. The change wrought in a short time was marvellous. The Ameers were compelled to a choice of policy without waiting to see what became of the returning bodies of our soldiery from Cabul. They must choose, as Napier told them, between an honest policy and our alliance, and a treacherous one with war. Their nominal choice was one way, and their real one another; and their defeat was entire. They broke faith in all directions, trusting to their sandy deserts, their rock fortresses, their wild Belpochees, their sun and their river to save them from retribution. They perhaps trusted also in the humanity of the British General who had given them every opportunity to preserve peace. When they had mustered 60,000 of their troops in the neighbourhood of the 3,000 who composed Napier's force, and when proofs were obtained of their intention to murder British officials during a conference, and over a European woman and child who could be found in Scinde; and when they had actually slaughtered many British on the Lower Indus, the die was cast. This happened early in February, 1843; and on the 15th the Residency was attacked, its inmates taking refuge on board a steamer in the river. Foreseeing what would happen, the General had, in the preceding month, destroyed the desert fortress and stores of Emaum Ghur, on which the Ameers relied for retreat—an achievement which Wellington declared in Parliament to be one of the most remarkable of

tary feats on record. It was now necessary to fight a pitched battle near the capital; and that conflict was the battle of Meeanee, fought on the 17th of February, 1843. The British were 2,400; the enemy 35,000—warriors by profession. Yet they lost 6,000 killed, all their ammunition and stores, their artillery and standards, and everything that their camp contained. The Ameers yielded up their swords, but ere long were again hoping “to Capul the English.” Within five weeks of the battle of Meeanee that of Hyderabad was fought, with equal honour to the British; and then Scinde was our own. The strong hand was necessary for some time longer in regard to the wandering forces of so desultory an enemy; but before Napier left Scinde, in 1846, the country was in a more peaceful and prosperous condition than ever before within the memory of man. The Ameers had plucked up or burned down villages by the score, to make hunting-grounds for their children; they had wrested from the people the earnings of industry, and all property that showed its head above water; no man was safe from their cruelty, and no woman from their profligacy. Under Napier’s rule the tillage of the country so improved that the world was invited to buy grain where famines had been common occurrences; and robber bands settled down thankfully and peacefully as cultivators, leaving broad districts so secure that villages sprang up everywhere, almost within sight of each other.

Public works went on vigorously, and the world began to see what might be made of Kurachee as a port. With all, this, and after having sustained a season of pestilence, and fixed the payments of the people at a sum which they could easily afford, Sir Charles Napier had a surplus for the Company's treasury. The police systems which are so highly praised in the Punjaub, Madras, and Bombay, are adopted from that which he established in Scinde. The country which he found scantily peopled and lying desolate, he animated with a population of returned artisans and cultivators, who poured back from exile or from robber life, to swarm about his new canals, and rear his embankments, and raise harvests in the lands thus retrieved. For five years the old man sustained the climate and his excessive toils with the same high courage which had won the battles of Meeanee and Hyderabad; but in 1847 he resigned and came home. Lord Ellenborough, who had supported and approved his measures with steadiness and vigour, was recalled by the Directors, against the desire of Ministers, in April, 1844. This unprecedented exercise of the Directors' undisputed privilege deeply impressed the English nation with a sense of the dislike of conquest which prevailed in Leadenhall-street; and the sympathy felt by the English public in the Company's reluctance to enlarge our Indian dominions caused the merits of Napier's conquest and administration to be underrated at the time, and till very recently. If was not likely that a

war which was "the tail of the Afghan storm" should not be more or less involved in the disgrace of that fearful mistake.

The other war consequent on the same error, that of the Punjaub, came to a head in 1845. Lord Ellenborough had been succeeded by Sir Henry (afterwards Lord) Hardinge, who, as a soldier, was supposed to be more aware of the evils of an aggressive policy than civilians have sometimes proved themselves, while his moderation, and his dignified conceptions of national duty and character, would ensure a sufficiently strong policy. It was an appointment which united all suffrages. And yet Lord Hardinge, like his predecessors, found himself obliged to go through a war immediately on his arrival.

There had always been an expectation that whenever Runjeet Singh died, there would be trouble with his soldiery; and it soon appeared that some incursion was in contemplation, for which the Sikh troops were prepared by an able European training under French officers. While the strife about the succession was going on in the Punjaub, the military element of society there became supreme; and the government at Calcutta considered it necessary to move troops to the frontier to preserve peace, and reassure the inhabitants of whole districts which dreaded the incursions of a haughty and lawless soldiery. The Sikhs were alarmed at the approach

of English troops, and adopted the same course towards us that we had tried with their western neighbours—they crossed the frontier to forestal our doing it. Whether this move was a device of the Sikh chiefs, as some say it was, to get rid of the army, and perhaps to cause its destruction by the British, and thus to clear the field for their own factions; or whether war with the British was considered so inevitable that the invasion of our territory was intended as a measure of prudence, we need not here decide. The fact was that the Sikh soldiery gathered round the tomb of Runjeet Singh, preparing themselves for a great battle soon to happen; and that war was virtually declared at Lahore in November, 1845, and fairly begun by the troops crossing the Sutlej on the 11th of December, and taking up a position near Ferozepore. The old error prevailed in the British councils, the mistake denounced by Charles Metcalfe as fatal—that of undervaluing the enemy. The Sikhs had been considered unworthy to be opposed to the Affghans in Runjeet's time; and now we expected to drive them into the Sutlej at once; but we had never yet in India, so nearly met with our match. The battle of Moodkee was fought under Sir Hugh Gough, on the 18th of December, and "the rabble" from the Punjaub astonished both Europeans and Sepoys by standing firm, manœuvring well, and rendering it no easy matter to close the day with honour to the

English arms. This ill-timed contempt was truly calamitous, as it had caused miscalculations about ammunition, carriage, hospital stores, and everything necessary for a campaign. All these things were left behind at Delhi or Agra; and the desperate necessity of winning a battle was only enough barely to save the day. The advantage was with the British in the battle of Moodkee, but not so decisively, as all parties had expected. After a junction with reinforcements, the British fought the invaders again on the 21st and 22nd, at Ferozeshur. On the first night our troops were hardly masters of the ground they stood on, and had no reserve, while their gallant enemy had large reinforcements within reach. The next day might easily have been made fatal to the English army, at times, when their ammunition fell short; but the Sikhs were badly commanded at a critical moment, then deserted by a traitorous leader, and finally driven back. For a month after this nothing was done by the British, and the Sikhs crossed the Sutlej at their ease. The valour of Gough and of Hardinge, who, while Governor-General, had put himself under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief, had saved the honour of the English; but their prestige was weakened among their own Sepoys, and even the European regiments; much more among the Sikhs; and most of all in the eyes of the vigilant surrounding states. It was a matter of life and death now to bring up guns,

ammunition and treasure. A considerable portion fell into the enemy's hands on the 21st of January, on its way to the relief of Loodeeana; but the battle of Aliwal on the 28th was again a true British fight. The Sikhs were driven into the Sutlej; and as soon as they had collected in their stronghold of Sobraon on the other side, they were driven thence by a closing struggle on the 10th of February. The Sikhs were beaten, with a slaughter of 5,000 (some say 8,000) men, against 320 killed and 2,000 wounded on our side. The Maharajah submitted, the road to Lahore lay open, and the Governor-General could make his own terms. He flattered himself that he had arranged a protectorate of the Punjaub which would render annexation unnecessary; and all who could believe in it rejoiced that means had been found to escape the necessity of adding new conquests to a territory already much too large. As the Punjaub could not pay its amount of tribute to the Company, Cashmere and some other territory was accepted instead, and given, as a kingdom, to Gholab Singh (whose death we have just heard of) on his paying a portion of the debt, thus reimbursing the Company, and lessening the overgrown power of the Punjaub rulers. When, at the close of 1846, the English troops should be withdrawing from Lahore, the Sikh chiefs begged that they might remain, and take care of the Punjaub till the young Maharajah should grow up to manhood. The sub-

sequent events are fresh in all memories—the murder of Mossrs. Agnew and Anderson, the siege of Mooltan, the difficulties and threatenings which made it necessary to send out a commander of the highest order from England, and the despatch of Sir Charles Napier to fill that function—Wellington saying, in reply to his plea of age and ill-health, “If you do not go, I must.” Sir Charles Napier found the war at an end when he arrived; and none of us forget, and history will not forget, the kind of service he did render in reforming the Indian military service, and offering warnings of the very catastrophe under which we are now mourning. He was rebuked and compelled to resign, in consequence of his treatment of Sepoy mutiny occurring under his own eyes, and within the sphere of his command. Service of this kind we owe to his mission of 1849; but the annexation of the Punjaub was completed before his arrival, as the consequence of treacherous rebellion first, and, next, of the series of victories by which it was punished. The proclamation by which the Punjaub became annexed to the Company’s territories was dated March 29, 1849. The Governor-General who issued this proclamation was Lord Dalhousie, who succeeded Lord Hardinge in 1847. In this case, he merely completed Lord Hardinge’s work; but before he returned, in 1855, he achieved an annexation which is inseparably connected with his name. We need

more than insert the annexation of Oude in its connection with the history of the English in India, while the mother of the deposed King is in London, and her son in imprisonment at Calcutta, on suspicion of a participation in the existing revolt. Our readers must know, as well as we could tell them, why he was deposed; and recent newspapers must have told them what it is that his representatives in London allege and desire. It is enough, therefore, to notice a few facts of a prior date.

We have seen how early some relations of a subsidiary kind existed between Oude and the rulers of British India. Above half a century ago, some portions of territory, the Doab and others, were ceded to the Company, in lieu of omitted payments; and the whole transaction was repeatedly discussed in Parliament, at the instigation of Lord Wellesley's enemies, and other critics of Indian proceedings. It was understood to be established by those discussions that the military defence of Oude could at no time since the English ruled in Bengal have been maintained otherwise than by British aid; that the princes of Oude were kept on the throne by British assistance alone; that the misgovernment of those princes rendered the payment of their dues to us impossible; and that no resource remained against external invasion and internal ruin but the support afforded by the English, their intervention in ruling, and their obtaining the

means, by taking territory in payment of debts. From time to time since, there have been disclosures, the truth of which seems to be undisputed, of a kind and degree of corruption existing in the administration of Oude which could never have been exceeded in any age, and under any rule. There is no question of the fatuity and monstrous vice of the sovereigns, nor of the degradation and misery of the people, nor of the gradual extinction of all the means of social virtue and happiness within the territory. Our readers have probably seen various recent works of travel which show something of what the Court of Oude long ago became, and of the contrast its territory has presented with the prosperity of far less fertile lands under the Company's control. Before that territory was released from the tyranny of its native ruler, the people were escaping from it with every opportunity of absconding. Within a single generation, districts which had bloomed like a garden had become unable to support a twentieth part of the human life which had subsisted there; and when the starving people strove to escape into the Company's territories, it was at the risk of being pursued and hunted like slaves. Of the 200,000 Sepoys recently serving in the Company's forces, 40,000 were from Oude alone, refugees from the oppression at home. When the Sovereign had become inextricably involved in debt, and wholly incapable of discharging his obli-

to the Company, and when, at the same, time the whole kingdom was sunk in discontent and wretchedness, Lord Dalhousie caused the King's deposition, gave him wealth sufficient to gratify his desires and accord with his habits, and placed the country under British administration. It was done without bloodshed, without apparent resistance, and evidently to the prodigious relief of the people. If there was anything wrong about it, the public will soon know it; but the act has been and will be abundantly discussed in connection with the existing revolt, of which some consider the annexation of Oude the proximate cause. As so many of the Sepoys come from Oude, there may be some such connection between the facts; but, as far as we know, no evidence has been brought forward to show that the people of Oude desire their Sovereign back again, or express any wish to fall again under the pressure of his extortions, or be presented again with the spectacle of his corrupt court. The truth will be ascertained, speedily and certainly; and meanwhile we have only to fit that territory into the map of our Indian possessions as it is now drawn on our interior conceptions. It is a splendid country for its natural advantages and its traditional grandeur. Its capital, on which our eyes now wait so anxiously for the coming forth of a thousand of our countrymen and countrywomen, vies with the capitals of Europe in numbers and splendour. As it is the

last, so it is about the richest of our acquisitions; and its recent condition is as fair a warning as we could have of what must become of India, in the most peaceful times, if our civilizing and dispassionate rule were withdrawn.

We have now traversed the areas of space and time which lay before us when we began to survey the compass of our Indian history. We have seen the first trader at his landing, and have now witnessed the entrance into fellow-citizenship with us of the multitude whom the rulers of Oude have driven from their own allegiance to ours. It is a strange and unparalleled history, and will utter its own moral. We shall only unfurl the scroll once more, just to see what the various inhabitants of this mighty country were doing—how they were living—at the moment when the present revolt broke up the whole order of society.

the wealth of the place, or satisfied themselves that there is none? Thus is the native rural life passed between hope and fear, alternate hunger and fullness, with strifes and amusements to pass the time.

Elsewhere there are wide barren plains where the sight of Englishmen is common enough; but always as travellers. Within the vast horizon there are innumerable groups of ruins, showing that this sandy desert was once covered with cities. The existing race live in huts built in among these ruins, and in their daily business pass through marble colonnades, seeing pillar after pillar crumble and fall; or they thread a labyrinth of tanks full of dust, and unroofed mosques. Here and there some gilding glitters under the sun, and snowy cupolas or parapets seem to cut clear into the deep blue sky, while only the birds go in and out, and wild creatures harbour among the rubbish. Here the Europeans come, either to explore, or on their way to some native court, or their own Residency. Their presence is very imposing, from the length and obsequiousness of their train of followers. Sometimes the stranger attends to the sick; and at all events the sick try the experiment whether he will or not. Sometimes he will hear their complaints, and may be going his rounds to observe the state of affairs, and redress abuses. But occasionally he comes only to explore the ancient buildings; and then it is a lucky day for the oldest inhabitant, or the one with the

best memory, who can tell what race built here first, and what became of the Hindoos when the Moguls came upon them, and which mosques were built by this, and which by that Mohammedan ruler. In some of these ruined cities there has been such a jumble of faiths up to our own time, that Mussulman inhabitants have offered up flowers and other sacrificial articles forbidden in the Kurán, while the poor Hindoos worshipped in the mosques, supposing it to be all right to do homage in any sacred place. Elsewhere the desecration is from ignorance on the other side. It is naturally impossible for the superior race, in such cases, to begin ruling with any adequate knowledge of the minds and circumstances they are dealing with. Above all, this mischief must exist when the subordinate race has been surprised in that stage of civilization in which the religious, political, and social institutions are mutually incorporated. There is a period in the progress of every race and people when the priests are, *ex officio*, rulers, warriors, legislators, physicians, and scholars; and it is then impossible to touch any part of the polity under which they live without affecting all the rest. In such cases, the most benevolent arrangements, and the best-intended reforms, may make eternal enemies of the subject people, or break their hearts. Passing over the dreadful instances of injury caused by mere levity, as that of some giddy soldiers compelling a Brahmin to swallow one drop of beef

broth, when all the powers of ecclesiastical and civil Government were inadequate to retrieve the sufferer from perdition, there is worse behind, in the shifting of inheritances, and other arrangements of the British, which seem good, and just, and benevolent to them, but are absolutely fatal to those whom they affect. The wisest know little yet of the political and social operation of the worship of ancestors among the Hindoos at this day. In a general way, the English see that the bachelors among themselves are regarded with a disgust and contempt barely covered by respect for their power; and that married men without sons are objects of compassion. They see this, and they inquire about those observances which they must never witness—the oblations to ancestors—and then, not dreaming of any connection among such things, they decree changes in hereditary rights and customs, alter successions, deprive heirs and set up new ones, try to abolish infanticide, and so on. They explain the principles of justice on which they proceed, and trust they are gaining confidence and reputation, while they are cursed by victims whom they have unconsciously doomed to excommunication here and perdition hereafter. No small amount of Mahratta hate has been brought upon us in this way; and there have always been by-places where Brahmins have been fomenting discontent, and reciting curses against the Christians, while their other conquerors, the Mohammedians, have been uttering

daily prayers, for a hundred years, that the Delhi race of sovereigns might be restored, and the Europeans driven from the country. But a few months ago, while our rule in India was apparently unassailed, and even unquestioned, it was a subject of nightly talk—from under the eaves of English bungalows to the deepest recesses of Hindoo temples—that our impiety must overthrow us; that the first of religious truths was the Family being the basis of the State, ancestors being an eternal race of gods, and sonship an eternal institution; whereas the British do not take care of their ancestors, nor religiously provide heirs, while they impiously meddle with succession, even making changes in royal families, and among groups of princes like that of the Marhatta chiefs. Thus has the Brahminical mind been seething and boiling under that external homage which was, to the last moment, paid to British superiority and power.

Elsewhere there has been an opposite state of mind growing up, under the irresistible influence of material improvement. Low down in the Madras Presidency, there was misery, a quarter of a century ago, which could scarcely be surpassed. The rivers had long been neglected, and they were emptying or choking one another; swamping good land in one place, and drying it up into mere desert in another. The inhabitants dwindled away in numbers and resources, and when a famine occurred they lay

down and died. Then came in British knowledge and capital—deepening a stream here, embanking another there; regulating and distributing the waters with scientific foresight, so that they improved their own channels from year to year. Then crops sprang up over scores of square miles, and the revenue was greater than it had ever been, and the cost was repaid, and land sold for rising prices, and inhabitants covered the country, till the whole region was as populous as Belgium or Lombardy. Such were the results of the British works on the Cauvery and other rivers of the Deccan, where the ancient apparatus of irrigation had fallen into ruin. Analogous improvements in the west and north have as yet been too new to attach the inhabitants to us, so readily as by an immediate benefit like that of irrigation. Under the western Ghauts the villagers come out at the sound of the steam whistle, and the babies gasp and cry as the train rushes by; and nobody denies that the railway is a wonderful thing: but the question is whether it is right; and very few are aware of the bearings of the invention. In Hindostan Proper, we know, there has been a controversy for years as to how far the accommodation of the rail will lessen the merit of pilgrimages: and this is symbolical of the whole contest between the two degrees of civilization which have come into open conflict. The great fundamental condition of goodness of every sort—patient

slowness—seems to the Hindoo to be overthrown by our inventions. Immutability, patience, indolence, stagnation, have been the venerable things which the Hindoo mind hated the Mussulmans for invading with their superior energy; and now what is Mussulman energy in comparison with ours, judged by our methods of steaming by sea and land, and flashing our thoughts over 1,000 miles in a second! For many months past the priest class had filled all others with fear of the new *régime* of the arts, before any English ear caught a word of anything but admiration and amazement. Still, wherever land became more valuable, and crops more abundant, and new markets were opened, and the oppressions of native rulers were checked, and any way was opened to new knowledge, and higher social consideration, our rule was valued, and our continued presence desired, whatever might be said by Brahmin or Mussulman. We have seen something of this lately in the succours which have been given in the villages to our helpless fugitives; and we shall see it more when the people are disabused of their notion that our rule is over. Perhaps they do not know so well as we do how wretched their condition would presently be if the English were really to withdraw; but they have a sufficient share of human reason to perceive how much better their fortunes are than those of their fathers; how far they have recovered already from the consequences of internal

warfare, and what they may expect from such a permanent condition of peace as can be secured only by English rule.

While the grain fields, and the poppy, indigo, flax and cotton cultivation were going on of late so cheerily, what was doing in the towns? In Bombay, more than half the commerce is in the hands of Parsee merchants, while natives fill the chief professions with respectable ability and learning. These classes of natives throughout the country have nothing to learn of us in regard to the pursuits and enjoyments of life. They have among them men of piety, of philosophy, of science, and of patriotism and benevolence. Throughout the interior such men distinguish all the great towns as much as the Presidential ports. The grand difficulty is, as it has always been:—what relations are these superior natives and the British to bear to each other in time to come? Are they to be always apart, as men of such different races, minds, faiths, and customs, must apparently be? and if so, which is to rule? The leading men of all the native races declare that, notwithstanding our beneficent reforms and our good institutions, we know them less, and care for them less, than our predecessors did; and the more they appreciate and share our enlightenment, the less can they perceive any prospect of partaking our social advantages. They are fully aware, no doubt, of the benefit of our new native

schools, and of every effort made by Anglo-Indian statesmen to promote study, preparation for office, freedom of the press, and literary enterprise; and yet they assert that the English know and care less about their affairs, value their friendship less, and discourage approximation more than was the case in the days of their and our grandfathers. Whether this impression is more or less true, it exists; and how to deal with it will be the most important question of all when we are again free to plan for the social amelioration of India.

It is impossible to do more than glance at the religious world of Hindostan. The monstrous and frivolous rites and decorations of the Hindoo temples still look like a burlesque on the ancient heathen idolatries of Europe; and Mussulman worship is pretty much the same everywhere. There are the mosques, with their simple observances veiling an impassioned fanaticism; and the Moslem schools, where a whole generation of boys spend long years and a world of energy on words—a gabble of formulæ which does little more than prepare them for a further future study of words. However, they were taught something remarkable a few months ago—that they were living in a great and glorious age when the Prophet's true princes would be restored, and the "damned Christian infidels" would be victimised for the honour of Islam. It seems as if the Mussulman boys of India had been inspired

recently with much the same feeling as animated the little daughters of Judah at the time when the expectation of the Messiah was most intense; and in this case the expectation has been sustained by the most magnificent fictions about the decline and fall of Britain under the hostility of the Sultan of the Porte, the head of their religion. When the British indigo-planter, or merchant, or military or civil officer, passed near the school whence issued the unique vociferation of Mohammedan schoolboys, and saw them balancing themselves on their haunches, with their tablets before them, he little imagined how he was regarded by these young zealots, as the victim about to meet his doom. The same might be said of the way in which the wise and bold English were regarded wherever the higher orders of Hindoos were collected. If the British discovered their approaching misfortune anywhere it was in the army. It is a good many years now since Sir Charles Napier, and other officers who had courage to speak out, gave warning of the changed temper of the sepoys; and it will probably appear hereafter that the disclosures were not neglected, but that the disaffection was seen to be so wide-spread, and felt to be so unmanageable, that the whole case was left to fate. Time may reveal what were the anticipations of the outgoing and the incoming Governor-General, when Lord Dalhousie gave place to Lord Canning in 1856. As to the apparent features of the disaffection, a

few months since, we have all heard so much that we need say but little. The Bengal sepoy had long been growing unmannerly; and a more significant symptom could not be in high-bred Asiatics. They treated their European officers with disrespect; they objected to orders, and actually refused some kinds of service, and made conditions about others; and in all cases they were indulged. It is no part of our business here to judge or censure; but only to present the phenomena of the Indian case. A few months since the soldiery were in a loose and infirm state of mind as a body; now suspicious of their officers, and now devoted to them, as the idea of personal danger arose. One hour they admired the cartridges to be harmless; and the next they were suspicious of every movement of every Christian. Meantime, running messengers were carrying the mysterious little cakes from village to village, from barrack to barrack; and where they had passed no confidence grew up again. Sometimes an order came from the ex-King of Oude, or, what was the same thing—in his name. Sometimes it was the Emperor at Delhi whose commands they received. And thus, at Delhi whose commands they received. And thus, vigilant by day, and conspiring at night, went on the Mohammedan soldiery.

As for the Hindoos, they were perhaps more deeply alienated still. They had a double conquest to avenge; and there can be little doubt that such men as the Rajpoots were convinced that, once having

expelled the British by Mussulman aid, they could soon get rid of Mogul rule too—considering that the Mohammedans are computed to form only one-eighth of the population of India at this day. We can have no inclination to dwell on what these men were doing and thinking within the present year, after the way in which they have acted out their thoughts and their will. Our readers can imagine them for themselves, on the parade ground, with their passions well-buttoned down under their uniform, or in their secret conclaves, when they whispered their disgust at Christian immoralities (as they are pleased to call celibacy and the position of our ladies), and their horror at the number of souls that these Christians had, with the best intentions, sent to perdition hereafter through the purgatory of excommunication here.

That country, like every other, is peopled mainly by an ignorant industrial class, whose movements are the most important while the least attended to. They may be best observed, perhaps, outside the gates of great towns, on market days, when the country people are pouring into the city. Above, the minarets and shining cupolas are seen rising from a mass of foliage—of sycamores, acacias, palms; tamarinds, and banyan trees; below runs a broad river, between grassy banks, or sandy shoals; and midway are crowds of people crossing the bridge, or hurrying along the bank, with their piles of fruit and loads of grain, while the bazaars within are so

thronged that horsemen cannot get through without risk of manslaughter. In the private dwellings, servants abound to an extent unknown in Europe, every office having its own functionary. There is, therefore, a vast amount of lounging. In the bazaars there is a rapidly increasing variety of commodities, introduced by the freer trade of modern times; and this extension of industry has been supposed to have attached the lower classes to our rule by improving their condition and prospects. In the rural districts many more than formerly are busy in the fields; and a great number were plying their tools on the railways but a few months ago. This picture of hopeful industry we may trust to see restored. At the other end of the social scale, there was lately, as in all former time, a spectacle which no civilized man can look at with pleasure; that of the courts of the native princes. Within the white walls of those old palaces, there are scenes transacting which are too disgusting for description, or for conception by untravelled Europeans. A prince, half-idiotic through corrupt descent, corrupt rearing, corrupt ideas, habits, and examples, reigns within, indulging all the humours of tyranny and licentiousness; his domestic apartments are crowded with wives and concubines, abject to him and ferocious towards each other; his state officers are merely nominal, serving only as means of extorting money from his helpless subjects, without giving them any

of the benefits of government; and his household offices are filled by adventurers, intent only on their own convenience at everybody's expense. The alternative is probably between a rapid fortune of 100,000*l.* and loss of the head at any moment. The one certainty is of a catastrophe, sooner or later, in which the whole concern collapses. Debt, embarrassment, dependence, are the mildest forms of the issue; and treason within the palace, and rebellion outside, are always impending; while everybody knows that the English will be called in, as sure as fate, when the state of affairs is too bad to be longer endured. This scene, so often repeated, was last enacted in Oude, where the revenue had long been collected only within cannon range; where only one-third of the amount ever reached the sovereign; where millions of acres of fertile country were lapsing into jungle; and where tens of thousands of strong men entered the British army, while their families escaped to regions where no imbecile tyrant would have power over them. A few months ago there were insane exultations going forward in such palaces—an emperor here, and a king there being assured that their old power was coming back to them, and that soon no troublesome Englishman would interpose between them and their subjects, or prevent their gathering all the wealth of the country into their own laps. Now, we may fairly hope, there is terror and anguish in those palace-chambers, when the truth cannot be

concealed that the *raj* of the British is not over, and that traitorous princes are not permitted even to make terms of surrender.

What were the Europeans doing a few months ago? First, there were the settlers; planters of indigo, sugar, and cotton; merchants collecting and selling the native products; managers of public works, from the superintendents of the Ganges Canal, near the base of "the verdurous wall" of the Himalaya, to the engineers of the Cauvery works at the other extremity of the Peninsula. Some lived in isolated abodes, cottages deeply thatched, with wide eaves and broad verandahs, amidst gardens shady with tropical verdure, gay with blossoms, and fragrant with such English flowers as can be coaxed to grow there. Far north there are tea plantations, divided by hedges of Persian roses. Amidst the young rivers which are to be bridged, or joined by canals, the Englishman lived in woods tangled with vines, noisy with monkeys, gay with parrots and giant butterflies, and harbouring the tiger and other rude neighbours. These English, whether civil or military, were regarded as a sort of natural princes. On their journey their bearers cried out, "Make way, for we have a great lord within;" or, if they travelled by the humblest cart, the Sepoys they met faced about and gave the military salute, while the peasants almost prostrated themselves in the roads. In the town the way was cleared for them in the

thick of the market; and in the country all yielded to their convenience. No doubt, every European of them all would have gladly exchanged all this obeisance for a better quality of industry and improved truthfulness and fidelity; but we are telling what things were, and not what they were wished to be. The mode of life of the civil servants of the Company was externally much the same, with the added features of social companionship and institutions, and especially a church, where there were Europeans enough to constitute anything like a public. But there was a probation of solitary up-country life usually to be gone through first. The young Englishman lived alone, collecting revenue, administering justice in small matters, and bearing the ennui and the climate as well as he could. If he was wise, he used his opportunities for studying the people, their language, mind, character, and interests, and for improving his knowledge in all collateral ways, as a preparation for higher office. If he was high-couraged, he made himself a benefactor to multitudes, and a terror to wrong-doers. If he was weak, he pined. If he was vulgar, he smoked and drank, and gave the climate every advantage over him. If he was sentimental, he wrote his autobiography or reams of poetry. If he was frivolous, he frittered away his time and opportunities, his health and his small means.

As for the military European settlements, they are

so prominent a feature in all sketches of the country, by pen or pencil, that little could be told which is not already known. The cantonments at Agra, consisting of civil and military lines, occupy the space of a large city—five miles by two—with broad, smooth roads, a park, a church, and large edifices for Government and commercial purposes. At Meerut there were all the usual advantages, with remarkably luxuriant gardens, from the abundance of good water. At Cawnpore, the broad Ganges rolled in front of the British residences, for five miles of scattered houses and gardens lining the steep river bank. From under the shade of spreading trees, and amidst the gorgeous flowers of the region, the residents looked across the muddy river, alive with traffic, to the low white beach beyond, and the wide-spreading plain, all green with springing crops, or hazy with heat. Here, as we too well know, lived ladies and children; and at most of these principal settlements were missionaries, American or European. There were Christian schools and services; there was duty, civil or military, for the gentlemen; and the ladies visited one another, and took evening drives and early morning rides; and all were hospitable to travellers. No one doubted the faithful attachment of the people generally, however painful might be the occasional suspicion of the soldiery. As to the missions, every diversity of opinion seems to exist

about their influence and success. They were private enterprises, one and all. The Government afforded Christian institutions to its Christian servants, and to all who desired to make use of them; but all proselytism was absolutely forbidden to the Company's agents. The one thing about which honest people can have no doubt is, that such being one of the conditions of the Company's service, no Government officer, civil or military, was at liberty to attempt the conversion of natives, either himself or through any of his family. On all other points more evidence is required before any trustworthy decision can be arrived at in England. Some believe the conversion of a great number of natives to be genuine, and of a permanent character; others declare that it is a matter of imitation and deference—sincere on the part of the convert, as an act of duty, but without any notion of conviction of the judgment or renovation of the heart; while others again believe the whole process to be one of self-interest. Some agreement must be arrived at, and a new, definite, and firmly-grounded policy must be chosen as the very basis of our government of India henceforth. Meantime, while our cantonments still existed, as the homes of the British in India, the schools were open on week-days, and the church on Sunday; and the residents felt, so far, as if at home.

Among the interests of those residents were sectional

jealousies which cannot be altogether passed over in any sketch of Indian life. The British of the Three Presidencies have always sparred at each other, like the adherents of rival political parties, rival churches, rival industries, rival public services all over the world. The mutual repulsion has not been anything like that of the northern and southern states of America, or that of Mohammedans and Hindoos, and both these, and the Sikhs in Hindostan: but it has been enough to give some of its colour to life in India. The Madras officer quizzes the *Qui-hi*—the Bengal officer—caricatured, as dependent on his servants, whom he summons with his “*Qui-hi?*” (“who is there?”) all day long. The retort is by calling the Madras men *mulls*—the caricature being, in that case, of a perpetual feeder on mulligatawny. Both assume airs towards the Bombay service, which has its own reasons for valuing itself. In an hour of peril, no doubt all such strifes give way; but the mutual contempt or dislike of the three services must be taken into the account, both in the conception of life in India, and in forming judgments at home on Indian affairs from the testimony of witnesses who know most about them as matters of fact.

There remains the capital. By all accounts, there are few things finer than the approach to Calcutta by the Hooghly from below. The spaces, both of land and water, are so grand—the woods below and

the edifices higher up so magnificent, and the character of the residences so unique, as to bewitch the stranger at first sight. There are drawbacks, in the shape of mud huts or bamboo hovels, or mere wigwams set up under the shelter of palace walls; contrasts symbolical of life in India altogether. But it is a gay scene,—life in Calcutta,—and very striking to those who consider that it is the centre of the most prodigious administration existing in the world. Under the direct dominion of the Governor-General there are above 23,000,000 of people, living on 240,000 square miles of territory; while under the British rule in the three Presidencies there are no less than 132,000,000 of people, occupying 837,000 square miles. These are exclusive of the native states, which are more or less under our influence and control, and the small foreign colonies, French and Portuguese, which must pursue a policy a good deal like our own. The serious business of such an empire is carried on within the imposing public buildings which glare in the Indian sun; and the recreation of the English in Calcutta is according to the old established fashion—of mighty dinners, where the tables groan under the weight of food; of brilliant balls, where the wonder is that the whole body of guests does not evaporate; and of excursions by land and water, where amusement and sport are pursued amidst the comments of crowds of

native observers. What those comments are like, the native papers show; and it is wondered at by Europeans who see them that the insecurity of our rule in India has not been very clearly conveyed by these papers to those whom it most concerned. There is a better public, however, watching us from the outside—the educated natives, who have parted with their old ignorance, their old superstitions, their old pride of race and dominion, without finding themselves adopted into that of the ruling nation. If we knew more of life in India as it is to these people, we might better understand our past, and foresee our future, and might have perhaps escaped the dismal present. They must be the special study of the wisest men among us when our strenuous military action shall have enabled us to resume, in a regenerated form, our civil rule.

At this point our survey of British life in India closes, brief and superficial as it is. The filling-in of our bare outline would be found full of wonder and of interest; and it has been no easy matter to abstain from all presentment of it. The main events were, however, quite enough for our space; and it was a matter of necessity to leave them standing alone, as resting-places for the attention and the memory. The reader now sees how the English entered India, what they found, and what they did there; and, in some degree, what their life was like

till it was broken up by the forces of disaffection like ice in spring. He may thus be enabled the better to understand the meaning and the bearings of the measures which will be taken for the re-affirmation of our empire.

THE END.

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he saw which way the battle would go, came forward with hesitation and fear as to his reception. Knowing that nobody better was to be had, Clive received him as the new Nabob of Bengal: He was the tool by whom the British were to govern the whole north-east of Hindostan. On the first conference after the installation of the new ruler, Omichund was present in all his dignity, expecting to receive his promised honours and rewards. He was abruptly told that he had been outwitted in his treachery; and the instant consequence was a fit, ending in idiocy. After a few months of childishness, most affecting in one so conspicuous for sagacity, and the ability which the natives admire most in their eminent men, he died. Clive had not contemplated this, if we may judge by his offers to Omichund of public employment, on the recovery of his health by a devout pilgrimage; but the great English captain considered it enough to say in after-times that he had only turned the intriguer's own arts against himself in an emergency which required all means of security.

The new Nabob caused his predecessor to be murdered, and placed the treasures of Surajah Dowla at the disposal of Clive and the committee. Clive accepted prodigious wealth; but he might have had ten times as much by merely refraining from refusal. The circumstances were new, and no rules or orders existed to meet the case. We hear now of "Lord Clive's Fund." This fund is the income of the great

legacy left him by his puppet Nabob, Meer Jaffier; and the proceeds were from the first applied to the relief of the invalids of the service. The Company lodged supreme power in his hands as soon as they heard of the battle of Plassey, and the virtual acquisition of Bengal by the British. Clive had much to do to work the new policy of ruling great Asiatic countries by means of native princes. At one time he had to sustain the Nabob against attacks from without; at another, to humble the Dutch as he had humbled the French; and not seldom to guard against the conspiracies between his own tool and enemies who bribed him from his allegiance; but he did it all—partly through the attachment of his adoring sepoys, whom he had brought from Madras, and multiplied into a considerable force—partly through the consciousness which existed all round that he alone could uphold the new order which he had created; but chiefly because he himself willed it. It will be seen that he had not looked forward enough, while meeting difficulties as they arose; and he had scarcely sailed for England, in 1760, when embarrassments appeared which made his successor and the committee aware that he would probably have to come out again.

Where was young Hastings during these years? He had joined Clive's expedition with enthusiasm—when it came up from Madras in December, 1756. But Clive soon discovered that Hastings had abilities

the (second) Rockingham Ministry, in which Shelburne (who represented the followers of Chatham) and Charles Fox held the Secretaryships of State. After the death of Lord Rockingham, and the succession of Shelburne to the headship of the Ministry (July, 1782), the Secretaryship of State for Foreign Affairs held by Fox was transferred to Lord Grantham¹.

When, just before the resignation of North, and before King George III had reluctantly committed the conduct of affairs to the Whigs, with the avowed task of terminating the War and recognising the Independence of America, the question of Peace had virtually become only a question of time, Benjamin Franklin, American Commissioner in Paris, had transmitted to Shelburne certain conditions of Peace, privately suggested by Vergennes to a Scottish intermediary named Oswald. They included the cession, by way of reparation, to France of Canada and Nova Scotia. In April, 1782, the British Cabinet decided to suggest, through the same channel, peace conditions of which the essence was the grant of Independence to the Americans and the restoration of Great Britain to the position in which she had been left by the Peace of 1763. In May, Fox commissioned Thomas Grenville (son of George Grenville) to write a similar communication to Vergennes; and the Cabinet authorised him (after Rodney's great victory) to propose, in the first instance, the recognition of the Independence of America by Great Britain. A most untoward difference of opinion, hereupon, arose between Fox and Shelburne as to the meaning of this 'offer—whether or not it was, as the latter contended, to be conditional on the conclusion of a general peace, instead of preceding it? Fox's motion that Independence should be unconditional was lost by a narrow majority; and, on Shelburne's appointment as successor to Rockingham, Fox, as stated, resigned, with certain other members of the Cabinet.

The result was a hitch in the informal peace negotiations at Paris; but, inasmuch as the American War—largely because of want of money—languished, though the Dutch as well as the French Govern-

¹ In 1782, the system of three Secretaries of State had ceased (the third or American Secretaryship being abolished); and there was instituted for it that of two Secretaries, one for Foreign and the other for Home and Colonial Affairs. But this arrangement did not prevent an anomalous state of things under Rockingham, when the two Secretaries of State, Fox and Shelburne, were at daggers drawn; so that, in Lord Rosebery's words (*Pitt* (1892), p. 22) it "is not matter for surprise that, within a month of their assuming office, Shelburne and Fox, the two Secretaries of State, had each their separate plenipotentiary at Paris negotiating for peace."

ment had now recognised American Independence, it was felt on all sides that the advent of peace could no longer be delayed. King George III's resistance had now been overcome, and France and Spain before long perceived the futility of the hope that Rodney might still be crushed and Gibraltar and Jamaica captured, or that, though their united navies, even without Dutch aid, still outnumbered the British, this condition of things would outlast America's remaining in the conflict, and their own solvency would continue. The negotiations for the Preliminaries of Peace were, accordingly, carried on at Paris with renewed assiduity in the later months of 1782; Vergennes, of course, representing France, d'Aranda Spain, and Franklin, John Adams and Jay America, while the British Government had commissioned, together with Oswald, its original agent in the proceedings, Alleyne Fitzherbert (afterwards Lord St Helens). The Preliminary Articles with the United States were signed on November 30th, and those with France and Spain on January 20th following. (The notion of giving up Gibraltar for an equivalent had approved itself to the King and Shelburne, but had been successfully resisted—among others by Pitt.) The definitive Treaties were signed, at Paris and Versailles respectively, on September 3rd, 1783; the Duke of Manchester and David Hartley having taken the place of the negotiators of the Preliminaries, and the Tsarina and the Emperor Joseph II being, by way of compliment, named as Mediators in the Treaties with the two European Powers. The Pacification with the United Provinces was characteristically delayed till 1784, when freedom of commerce was secured to Great Britain in the Indian Seas.

Compared with the Peace of Paris of 1763, which France and Spain had resolved to undo, the new Peace wears a depressing aspect on any British page of history, and reflects the balance of losses experienced by her in the War. Yet it should not be overlooked that almost everything now relinquished by her to her European adversaries had been taken from them by her in previous Wars, and that a great part of her acquisitions in the Peace of 1763 was still retained by her. The gains of France were, in substance, restricted to those in Africa and India; to the abrogation of the Utrecht Clause providing for the demolition of the fortified port of Dunkirk, and to the acknowledgment of the French right of fishery on the Newfoundland coast. Spain recovered Minorca and Eastern Florida, while agreeing to the British rights in Honduras and restoring the Bahamas.

The American settlement turned on that recognition of Indepen-

dence with which the negotiation virtually began—the promise of a compensation to the Loyalists, in lieu of the restoration of their estates, was a matter of secondary, though of considerable moral, consequence. On the whole, the American negotiations had been the most successful part of the entire transaction; and it should be noted that there had been considerable differences, at the end, between French and American diplomacy as to how far the latter had fulfilled its pledge of communicating, before signing, all preliminary agreements. Nor was Vergennes free from doubts whether, if Fox came into power in the place of Shelburne, he might not be disposed to conclude a separate peace with the United States. Yet there was no rupture, and the new loan which France had promised to the Americans was not refused to them. Spain detested the notion of American Independence, and cherished to the last the hope of an exchange with Great Britain of Guadaloupe for Gibraltar.

It will not be necessary, in the ensuing survey of British Foreign Policy from the Peace of 1783, to advert, except incidentally, to the Ministerial changes which occurred in the interval between the downfall of Shelburne's shortlived Administration, and the advent of the younger Pitt, who had held office in it as Chancellor of the Exchequer, to full power as Prime-Minister. Until the right solution was found in the appointment of the Minister who enjoyed the confidence of the nation in the first instance, and that of the Sovereign in the next, these changes turned on men rather than on measures; though of Shelburne, whose public conduct it is perhaps more difficult to judge with fairness than that of any contemporary British political leader, it was said, with some point, by his colleague, Lord Grantham, that he always trusted too much to measures rather than to men¹.

Indeed, his chief defect in his public career was, perhaps, his neglect of the Machiavellian maxim, that in politics everything depends on making and keeping friends—our enemies will take care of themselves. Yet it should not be forgotten that it was Shelburne² who, after his own resignation, suggested Pitt as the new Prime-Minister to the King, who was more than ready to act on the suggestion, in order to escape the hateful alternative—to which he after all had to submit—of the Fox and North Coalition. It lasted for little beyond eight months, under what is not very happily described as the "ornamental" headship of the Duke of Portland, the two reconciled adversaries

¹ See Lord Fitzmaurice's *Life of William Earl Shelburne*, III, p. 410 (1876).

² See J. Holland Rose, *William Pitt and National Revival* (1911), p. 125.

holding, Fox the Foreign, and North the Home and Colonial, Secretaryship of State. This was the Ministry—mistrusted by the nation, and looked upon with bitter resentment by the King—during whose tenure of office the Peace Treaties with the United States, and with France and Spain, were definitively signed, without any modification being introduced into them by the Whigs, who in Opposition had taken exception to them so strongly.

When, through the unconstitutional action of King George III, encouraged by the unscrupulous violence of Lord Thurlow and aided by the selfish ambition of Earl Temple, the Coalition had been, in December 1783, brought to a fall over Fox's East India Bill, Pitt was appointed Prime-Minister by the Sovereign, in the face of a hostile majority in the House of Commons. From Pitt's Cabinet, the Earl of Shelburne, long the leader of the party—or fraction—to which the new Prime-Minister had belonged, was left out, and William (afterwards Lord) Grenville, though a member of the Government, was admitted into the Cabinet till 1791; the Marquis of Carmarthen (eldest son of the Duke of Leeds) being, however, included in it as Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Defeated again and again in the Commons, but rendered confident by the gradual dwindling of the Opposition members, Pitt resolved—in the full sense of the phrase—to appeal to the nation. Early in March, 1784, Parliament was dissolved, and in May he met the new House of Commons at the head of an overwhelming majority. It was thus that he became the most powerful Minister ever known in our history. The foreign policy of the younger Pitt presents almost as many points of contrast with that of his father as could have coexisted with the personal qualities characteristic of both. But the task of the one was conditioned by the achievements of the other, and, though their rates of resolution differed, they alike proved equal to the unexampled responsibilities laid upon them by a nation whose self-trust they inspired and shared.

BOOK I

FROM THE PEACE OF VERSAILLES
TO THE SECOND PEACE OF PARIS
1783-1815

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December, 1783: Marquis of Carmarthen (Duke of Leeds).
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 January, 1805: Lord (Earl of) Mulgrave.
 February, 1806: Charles James Fox.
 September, — : Lord Howick (Earl Grey).
 March, 1807: George Canning.
 October, 1809: Earl Bathurst.
 December, — : Marquis Wellesley.
 March, 1812: Viscount Castlereagh (Marquis of Londonderry).

UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 1783 TO 1815.

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 — — : Hon. Dudley Ryder (Earl of Harrowby).
 February, 1790: George Aust (*Permanent*).
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 January, 1796: George Canning.
 April, 1799: John Hookham Frere.
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 February, 1806: Hon. George Walpole.
 March, 1807: George Hammond (*Permanent*).
 March, 1807: Viscount FitzHarris (Earl of Malmesbury).
 August, — : Hon. Charles Bagot.
 October, 1809: William Richard Hamilton (*Permanent*).
 December, — : Culling Charles Smith.
 February, 1812: Edward Cooke.

(*Later titles in brackets.*)

CHAPTER I

PITT'S FIRST DECADE.

1783-1792

ELEVEN months before he died, that is to say in September, 1785, Frederick the Great of Prussia, with the Duke of Brunswick in attendance, gave to a Special Envoy from Great Britain¹ a survey of the state of Europe as he saw it, or affected to see it, and of England's position among the Powers since the Peace of 1783. Frederick was gloomy—gloomy with intent, as Englishmen thought; but his view was a possible one and no statesman in Europe had better opportunities for gaining information than "old Fritz who knew everything that he wanted to know." The Balance of Power in Europe, he said, was lost. France, Spain, Austria and Russia "were in alliance," and Holland was dragged in their wake. England and Prussia were isolated. Even united, they would hardly be a match for "that mass which he had described." A struggle between such unequal forces might be attempted; but it "was not a game to play often." He very much doubted whether England could tackle the combined fleets of France, Spain, the United Provinces and Russia. The position of the United Provinces, he said, was particularly unfortunate. The power of the Stadholderate and of the House of Orange which held it was undermined: France wanted to destroy it and to govern the Provinces through her Ambassador. How could he—although the wife of William V of Orange was his niece—how could he prevent the Franco-Dutch alliance, which was at that moment in the making? Did England suggest an Anglo-Prussian alliance?—There had been talk of this. Well: he did not care to alarm the opposing "mass" by a treaty, but he would always be well disposed towards England. He had no doubt, he concluded with malicious courtesy, that Pitt would restore her "to the importance which she had formerly held in the scale of Europe," and render her "as great and respectable as his father had done²." It is likely that he had grave doubts. A few years earlier he had written to Brunswick, who stood at his elbow while he spoke to Lord Corn-

¹ Lord Cornwallis, the Special Envoy, to Carmarthen, September 20th, 1785.

² Salomon (*Pitt*, p. 316) takes this to be a considered judgment of Frederick on Pitt. To me it reads differently.

wallis, that "wealth,...luxury, the spirit of corruption, had all helped to rot that formerly so respectable Government." He was probably too cautious, in his sceptical old age, to hold, with Joseph II of Habsburg, that England had fallen "for ever," or that she had "gone down to the rank of a second rate Power like Sweden and Denmark¹;" but combined with an old grudge against her for deserting him in 1763, which made him unable altogether to conceal his *Schadenfreude*, was a real doubt as to her present efficiency, a doubt which he shared with all the chanceries of Europe. That British statesmen felt the need to silence this doubt is shown by the pains which Cornwallis took to convince him that we had not suffered in pocket by our recent disasters more than our rivals had suffered in defeating us, and that we were in a position "to support our weight and dignity with the other Powers of Europe²."

Lord Cornwallis had not been sent to Berlin on this occasion precisely to seek Frederick's alliance, though he was instructed to make it clear that England would prefer Prussia "to all possible allies." He went at Frederick's request, or rather at the request of Frederick's Ambassador in London. He had been warned to put no trust in the King and to be infinitely circumspect³. But his mission falls in a period during which the British Cabinet, conscious of its isolation, had put out feelers among the Northern Courts and at Vienna. These feelers had all been cautious; for, as Pitt wrote to Carmarthen in June, 1784, it was necessary "to lay the foundation of such connections, keeping clear at the same time of being too soon involved in the quarrels of any Continental Power⁴." If England could secure the support of Catharine of Russia, Frederick told Cornwallis, he would enter into a triple alliance "as soon as she pleased." He knew that Catharine disliked and despised the British Government more than he did himself; that advances had been made to her from London: and that these advances had been very coldly entertained. Having no intention of committing himself, and being anxious not to risk an open breach, either with France, who for the moment dominated western, or with Catharine, who seemed to rule eastern Europe, he could afford to speak warmly of his own readiness to enter this unlikely combination.

¹ Sorel, *L'Europe et la révolution française*, 1. 346.

² Joseph Ewart to Carmarthen, September 10th, 1785 reporting an earlier interview of Cornwallis with Frederick.

³ Draft of instructions for Cornwallis, September 2nd, 1785.

⁴ Salomon, *Pitt*, p. 300 n. Salomon gives a full account of the feelers of 1784.

His reference to "an alliance" between Spain, France, Austria and Russia was, strictly speaking, incorrect, and he knew very well that these Powers did not form a compact "mass." But they were linked together; and it was at least conceivable that, should the loose and selfish Alliances of Europe be consolidated by the threat of war, should the "General War," whose chances of outbreak the eighteenth century statesmen were always calculating, begin again, they would be found operating together. The Family Compact between France and Spain was a reality. It had worked already and would probably work again. The Alliance between France and Austria, the second link in the loose chain, seemed to have been tightened since an Austrian Princess had shared the Throne of France. Frederick knew how strong the anti-Austrian party in France was. The Alliance of 1756 had, from the first, been regarded as unnatural by the best Frenchmen. It was believed to have been unprofitable in a high degree. French politicians were always anticipating that Austria would again exploit it to their disadvantage. If France became engaged in "a complicated unsuccessful war," wrote a member of the French Council of State in 1785, who could promise that the Emperor¹ "would not claim Alsace and perhaps other provinces?" On the other side, also, the Alliance was not popular. At the end of 1784, the coolest head in the House of Habsburg, Leopold of Tuscany, Joseph's brother, called the French "our natural enemies, disguised as allies, who do us more harm than if they were open enemies²." Yet, uneasy as the Alliance was, the directors of policy on both sides found it for the present worth maintaining. Frederick told Viscount Dalrymple in December, 1785, that he knew there was no love lost between France and Austria; but that an Anglo-Prussian alliance would drive them together, and then he would have to face the nightmare risks of the Seven Years' War. So, he concluded, he must humour France³. It was a reasonable calculation.

The link in the chain of understandings most dangerous to Prussia was the recent agreement between Joseph and Catharine of Russia. At their first meeting, in Mohilev on June 4th, 1780, Joseph had replied to the Tsarina's mocking and calculated enquiry, why it was that he, a Roman Emperor, did not fix his capital at Rome, that there were difficulties in the way which he could not at present overcome, but

¹ *Mémoires lus au Conseil du Roi en 1784 et 1785*: quoted by Sorel, I. 295 n.

² Sorel, I. 441 n.

³ Dalrymple to Carmarthen, December 3rd, 1785.

that there would be no great difficulty in her case. Her Rome was not out of reach. By thus flattering her dearest ambition, he had won her favour once for all¹. Frederick's agents lost ground at Petrograd; and the world knew, during the next five years, that the Imperial Courts were revolving schemes for the partition of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of Russian rule at Constantinople.

In 1785 Catharine was not "in alliance" with France, as Frederick asserted to Cornwallis. But there was a very good understanding between Petrograd and Versailles. Catharine appreciated and admired the conduct of French policy under Vergennes. Relations were so confidential that, in 1784, she had received from one of Vergennes' subordinates a detailed account of the inner organisation of that French Foreign Office which had accomplished so much². The traditional friendship between France and Sweden was a permanent obstacle to a Franco-Russian alliance. Yet it was not insuperable. Frederick's insight into the realities of European diplomacy was proved, rather more than a year after his death, when England and Prussia had actually drawn together; for, in the autumn of 1787, Ségur, the very popular and accomplished French Ambassador to Catharine's Court, an old friend of England's enemies, transmitted to his Government a Russian project for precisely that Quadruple Alliance of France, Spain, the Tsarina and the Holy Roman Emperor which Frederick had feared³. The proposal came to nothing; but it was actually made.

Pitt's desire not to be "too soon involved in the quarrels of any Continental Power" was most natural. He was nursing British finance and the British navy, which depended on finance. This he was doing with no definite intention of revenge either on France or on America. He had probably less natural animosity against France than any of his colleagues; and certainly less than any of the leading British diplomatists of his day. When, in 1786, he protested in a famous apostrophe that "to suppose that any nation can be unalterably the enemy of another is weak and childish," he was expressing a conviction, not making a point in debate. But if he did not desire for his country revenge, he desired honour, weight in the counsels of Europe,

¹ Heigel, *Deutsche Geschichte*, I. 37.

² Doniol, *Le Comte de Vergennes et P. M. Hennin*, p. 47. Hennin was the subordinate who drafted the report. M. Doniol shows that it was Vergennes who "*organisa ce qui paraît ne l'avoir guère été jusqu'à lui: le ministère des affaires étrangères*,"

P. 44.

³ Sorel, I. 522, 532.

"respectability," as the word was understood in the eighteenth century. These were things which money, well used, could buy. Hence, in part, those great financial measures which filled the early years of his Ministry.

When Cornwallis assured Frederick that Great Britain had not suffered in power more than her foes, he made an understatement, either discreet or unconscious. Much as Englishmen groaned about the cost of the late War, many as were the prophecies of national collapse under the burden of the Funded Debt, the British finances, even before Pitt's reforms, were in a far better condition than the French; and the British financial system was probably the best in Europe. In a few years, Pitt made it incomparably the best. He was aided by the beginnings of those economic changes which were to fashion modern England. Canal building was now in full swing. The roads had become good enough to permit Palmer to start his swift mail coaches in 1784. Steam was first used to drive the air through a blast furnace in 1790. Between 1788 and 1796, the output of pig iron in Great Britain doubled. Those who directed European foreign policy were either completely ignorant of these things or did not reckon them at their full value. British statesmen had better opportunities of knowing the truth; and the least economic among them could see and appreciate the amazing expansion of the public revenue which set in, when a competent and upright financier handled freely the expanding resources of the nation.

From the first, Pitt had seen to it that a full share of his takings should go to the Navy. He maintained a larger *personnel* than had ever been maintained in time of peace. He insisted on receiving at regular intervals reports on the state and progress of the Fleet. In 1784 he set aside £2,400,000, a sum about equal to the total income of Frederick of Prussia, to build ships of war. By 1790, twenty-four new line-of-battle ships had been turned out from the private shipyards. By 1787, he was prepared to risk war. In 1790, when, for a time, war seemed certain, he had ninety-three sail of the line ready¹. At sea he would not have feared to meet France, Spain, Russia and the Habsburg Empire. By that time, he had not to face the possibility of meeting the Dutch also.

Some critical aspects of Great Britain's international position not referred to in Frederick's survey were very present to the minds of Pitt's Cabinet and of Continental diplomatists. And, first, the Irish

¹ Rose, *Pitt*, I. 210-1.

aspect. The establishment of Ireland's legislative independence in 1782 had seemed, to outside observers, a final proof of British decadence. Clearly perceiving the dangers of a semi-independent Ireland, Pitt put forward, in 1785, his generous scheme for Anglo-Irish Free Trade, to bind the two countries together; but English political and commercial prejudice ruined it¹. So natural did it seem to our Ministers to find the enemies of England fishing in the troubled Irish waters, that they were always on the look out for French intrigues. A careful watch was kept on the letter-post; and among the papers of the Duke of Rutland, Lord Lieutenant, for the year 1784, is a copy of a private letter from Sir Edward Newenham of Belcamp, Co. Dublin, to Lafayette, inviting him to a friendly visit, and promising him a warm welcome². The French knew well that Ireland was a source of weakness to England; but, as a matter of fact, French Ministers were not at this time, nor for several years later, engaged in intrigues there³.

If Ireland was a source of weakness, India was on the way to become a source of strength, though also of sustained anxiety, to British Ministers. British influence there had been steadily extended throughout the century. The Peace of 1783 had secured Negapatam from the Dutch. The need for some regular Constitutional link between the growing Eastern empire and the British Crown had led to Pitt's India Bill of 1784. When Cornwallis went to Berlin, he was already, in the mind of the Prime-Minister, the first parliamentary Governor-general designate. At first, Cornwallis had demurred, raising objections to the scope of his powers. These powers were extended by the Amending Act of 1786. The Governor-general could now override the views of his Council at Calcutta, and thus was in no danger of factious opposition from colleagues such as Warren Hastings had been obliged to face. Under Cornwallis (1786-93) what might be called the nineteenth century era of British rule in India began, with the power in the hands of a series of men of high ability, who enjoyed the full confidence of the Home Government.

Consolidation of British power in India had two main consequences in the sphere of international politics. First, France was forced to

¹ For the Irish propositions see, *inter alia*, Murray, *Commercial relations between England and Ireland*; O'Brien, *The economic history of Ireland in the eighteenth century*; Rose, *Pitt*, I.

² H.M.C. Rutland MSS. III. 119. Newenham happens to mention "my agent for my landed estates," Napper Tandy.

³ The evidence is in Lecky, VI. 369 *sqq.*

groped about, at times in India itself, at times elsewhere in the nearer or further East, for some equivalent—as the statesmen of the eighteenth century put it—in trade or dominion. Secondly, there began to emerge out of Asia the first true conflict of interests between Russia and Great Britain. Catharine was mastering the northern coasts of the Black Sea. Her orders were executed on the shores of the Caspian and on the banks of the Oxus. Her designs in the nearer East were frankly advertised. Henceforward, Russian policy became a matter of concern to every Asiatic Power—and Great Britain was now such. Moreover—though how far this was understood in England is doubtful—that policy might conceivably work in with France's gropings for an equivalent. In 1782, Joseph II had suggested to Catharine that perhaps France, a traditional ally of the Turk, might be induced to acquiesce in his destruction by the offer of Egypt. The case was debated at the French Council of State, with special reference to the effect of a French occupation of Egypt on Indian trade and politics¹. France had no wish to see Turkey dismembered; but she had to prepare for all the chances of a shifting world. The world did not shift so far at that time; so the hypothetical situations never arose. But the first of those clashes of British, French and Russian interests in the East which the occasion foreshadowed was not long postponed; nor was their termination to be the matter of a day.

Contrary to the expectations of the average diplomatist, apt to identify prestige and power, dominion and wealth, and not holding with Adam Smith that Britain's American empire had been "not a gold mine, but the project of a gold mine," the loss of the Thirteen Colonies had made singularly little difference to British prosperity. Independent, they traded with the United Kingdom very much as they had traded when dependent. Had it been possible to make a clean and satisfactory settlement in 1783, it is probable that the empire might have seemed to gain greatly by disruption; and it is certain that such a settlement would have contributed enormously to the world's peace during the succeeding century. But such a settlement was not made. Throughout the ten years 1784-94, the Treaty of Versailles remained imperfectly executed, and Anglo-American relations in the unwholesome condition of standing water. Since America had no part in the ever shifting "systems" of Continental Europe, to which Great Britain had to adjust her policy from year to year, their mutual relations in those ten years may be described here without reference to any of

¹ Sorel, I. 328-9.

these. Not until the French Declaration of War in 1793 were they really affected by the course of European affairs.

The final Treaty with the United States had been signed at Versailles three months and a half before Pitt took office; but, owing to distance and the inevitably slow working of the new American Constitution, the ratifications were not exchanged until May, 1784. After the exchange, David Hartley, the British representative, reported the anxiety of Adams, Franklin and Jay to proceed at once to the negotiation of an Anglo-American Commercial Treaty¹. The project was not new. It had been put forward at the time of the Preliminary Treaty, and had been pressed on Hartley by his American colleagues during his whole negotiation, from April to September, 1783. They wanted, as he reported to Fox, reciprocity "upon any terms whatsoever, from the narrowest limits to the utmost extent of mutual intercourse and participation." For himself, he had dreams of perfectly free intercourse, leading to a "family compact between our two nations²." But the letter in which he expressed this hope crossed his final instructions from Fox, to complete the political arrangements separately from the commercial. The British Cabinet was not ready to open the whole question of commercial policy and commercial law, and to define its attitude by treaty; though it was ready to make important concessions to the United States by Order in Council³. In any case, it was not prepared to show its hand at Paris. The Anglo-French and Anglo-American Treaties were to be signed simultaneously; and Fox held that commercial arrangements "ought not to come under the eye of the French Minister, much less to make part of a Treaty the completion of which he insists upon previous to the signing of his own, and which consequently he may be said in some degree to take under his protection⁴." This point of diplomatic procedure was a good one; but the unreadiness of London was the deciding factor.

David Hartley, a friend of Benjamin Franklin and of America, no ordinary diplomatist, an advanced Whig, a fellow of Merton College and, like Franklin, something of an inventor, was recalled

¹ Hartley to Carmarthen, May 13th, 1784.

² Hartley to Fox, May 20th and August 2nd, 1783.

³ Fox to Hartley, June 10th, 1783. He expresses his wish to put off "for a time the decision of that important question which you think at last must come to an issue, *i.e.*, how far the principles of our Navigation Act ought to be sacrificed to commercial considerations drawn from the peculiar circumstances of the present crisis."

⁴ Fox to Hartley, August 4th, 1783.

by Carmarthen without thanks or compliments on May 25th, 1784. He refused to understand a perfectly clear phrase of this letter—that commercial matters would “require a considerable degree of deliberation.”—and lingered in Paris until September, in spite of further recall orders. At last he was brought back by the cutting off of his appointments at a week’s notice¹. In June, Franklin was still hopeful that a commercial negotiation might be started; but by the end of July he had “begun to suspect that no instructions were intended².” Hartley should have perceived this earlier. Pitt’s Cabinet was no more ready to begin negotiations than Fox’s had been.

As, however, the American deputation remained in Europe, negotiating on economic questions with other Powers; and as a subordinate diplomatic agent reported them to be “very inquisitive” about the prospects of an Anglo-American treaty³, they were encouraged to come to London at the end of the year. “Your people are ready to listen to us,” wrote Franklin to Hartley, who was at Bath, occupied in drafting the final report of his mission for the unsympathetic Carmarthen; “but they thought it more for the honour of both that the treaty should not be in a third place⁴.” There is no evidence that the British Minister had written so definitely of “the treaty.”

John Adams, the first American accredited to the Court of St James’, was presented to King George on the afternoon of June 1st, 1785. Two months later he transmitted to Carmarthen a draft treaty, hinting in his covering letter that the results of inaction would be most serious for Anglo-American commercial and political relations⁵. The draft was not merely commercial; there were included in its twenty-six clauses important proposals of a political kind. Relations between the two countries were to be based on “the most perfect equality and reciprocity.” Subjects of either were to reside and pay duties in the other as if they had been citizens of it. They were to be free to send any kind of goods, wherever produced or manufactured, in ships of any description, with any class of crew, to all points in one another’s territory or elsewhere, subject to the right of either Power to prohibit,

¹ Carmarthen to Hartley, May 25th; August 20th; September 5th; September 17th.

² To B. Vaughan, July 26th. *Memoirs of Franklin*, III. 154.

³ Ed. Bancroft to Carmarthen, Paris, December 8th, 1784.

⁴ Franklin to Hartley, January 3rd, 1785. *Memoirs*, IV. 423. Hartley’s report to Carmarthen, dated from Bath, is of January 9th.

⁵ Adams to Carmarthen, July 29th, 1785. *The Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States, 1783–1789*, IV. 257 sqq.

for reasons of State, particular imports and exports. This clause (No. 4) was a direct challenge to the sections of the British Navigation Code which reserved inter-imperial trade to ships built and owned in the British empire, and manned by crews predominantly British, while excluding foreign ships from most of the carrying trade between British ports and ports outside their own territory. By subsequent clauses, each country was to guarantee the other most favoured nation treatment in the matter of customs, and to give every facility for the establishment of consular offices.

So much for pure commerce. In time of war between either country and a third Power, the legal principles of "free ships, free goods" and "enemy ships, enemy goods" were to be recognised: contraband, if found on the vessels of one of the Contracting Parties, was not to be confiscated, but deposited in a port of the capturing country and paid for; no embargo was to be placed on the shipping of the Party not engaged in the war "for any military expedition" or similar purpose; the subjects of neither Party should take from any third Power letters of marque for preying on the commerce of the other. In case of war between the Contracting Parties themselves, merchants were to have nine months' grace in which to wind up their affairs, and prisoners were not to be sent into distant and inclement countries, but to be housed in barracks such as were used for the captor's own troops.

Such were the main points of this remarkable draft. Apparently it fell dead. There survives a record of a conversation between Carmarthen and Adams in October, at which Carmarthen confined himself to generalities about Great Britain's desire for reciprocity¹. Four months later, an explanation of his reserve is suggested by a very stiff note to Adams, complaining of the failure of the United States to carry out the Treaty of 1783². Then, on April 4th, 1786, Adams, now in conjunction with Jefferson, sends him, "as requested in conversation," another draft treaty. It contains the commercial clauses of the previous draft, almost verbatim, but nothing else. Probably, Adams had pressed the matter and Carmarthen had responded *pro forma*. A month later again (May 8th) a confidential agent reports Adams as being "highly dissatisfied with his situation and the supposed dispositions of H.M. Minister towards the United States," and his correspondence as being "calculated to excite them" to commercial

¹ Minute of a conversation with Adams, October 20th.

² Carmarthen to Adams, February 28th, 1786.

and political hostility. At this point, the negotiation, if so it may be called, was broken off, and no more is heard of it in Great Britain for another four years.

There is no reason to think that, at any time between 1783 and 1793, Pitt's Cabinet was ready to throw overboard the Navigation Code; though Pitt acquiesced in those administrative relaxations which alone rendered Anglo-American trade possible. American produce, coming to the United Kingdom in American or in British ships, was treated just as if America were still a colony. Facilities were given, as in the old days, for the reexport of American tobacco and rice; and so on. But the strong American wish to trade freely with the Canadian and West Indian Colonies, and to carry between those Colonies and the Mother-country, was never frankly gratified. In 1783, Fox had explained to Hartley that the notion of admitting West Indian produce in United States bottoms must be ruled out: "the prejudice (if that be the name these opinions deserve)" was, he said¹, far too strong. So it remained. But this and other prohibitions were freely evaded. The West Indies, in particular, required food and lumber from the United States; and their merchants had pressed for a commercial treaty in 1783². Failing the treaty, they had to help themselves. A common device, as our early Consuls reported, was for a ship to be owned jointly by British and American traders and to utilise its double nationality³. Such evasion, though it might help traders, did nothing to promote an Anglo-American "family compact."

There is no need to assume, as Franklin did in 1784, that Great Britain had "still at times some flattering hopes of recovering"... "the loss of its dominion" over the United States⁴. The difficulties as to the Treaty of 1783 are sufficient to explain a great measure of reluctance to enter into further obligations. "By the fourth, fifth and sixth articles of the Treaty no impediments were to be put in the way of the recovery of debts [by British subjects]; the States were to be recommended to repeal their Confiscation Acts [directed against Loyalists]; and there were to be no future confiscations nor prosecutions of any sort against any person because of the part taken by him in the late war. But the States gave no heed whatever to these articles. The Confiscation Acts were not repealed; impediments were placed in the way of the recovery of debts; and thousands of Loyalists

¹ Fox to Hartley, June 10th, 1783.

² Resolutions of the West Indian Merchants, November 26th, 1783.

³ *E.g.*, Bond (Consul at Philadelphia) to Carmarthen, May 14th, 1787.

⁴ *Memoirs*, III. 154.

problems of neutrality, contraband, and the exercise of sea power, which John Adams's draft had attempted to provide against in advance, were revived in aggravated forms.

American sympathy was overwhelmingly on the French side, and Washington's Declaration of Neutrality, of April 22nd, 1793, was received with a storm of abuse¹. Great Britain's refusal to admit the right of American shipping to enjoy the trade of the French West Indies, now thrown open to it as a war measure; an Order to British cruisers to bring into port neutral cargoes of corn and flour destined for France; and the beginnings of the search of American ships for British seamen—all played into the hands of the Anglophobe party in America. These events, and those that followed, lie outside the chronological scope of the present chapter; but their outline, in their relation to the abortive negotiations of the ten years of peace, may be most conveniently sketched here. Pitt's Government had been sincerely anxious for a settlement when Hammond was despatched. The dangers of war stung it into decisive action. The initiative, however, came from Washington. With the approval of the Senate, he sent John Jay to England to arrange a treaty. His task was eased by an Order in Council of January, 1794, instructing naval commanders and privateers to stop only such neutral ships as were engaged in the direct trade between the French West Indies and France. By October 7th, 1794, Jay had signed with Grenville the Treaty which is usually called by his name. It was approved by President and Senate nine months later. "Jay was burned in effigy, guillotined in effigy, hanged in effigy, from Maine to Georgia²"; but ratifications were exchanged next year.

The Treaty reflects very imperfectly some of the principles of international intercourse which American negotiators had put forward in the previous decade; but it was in the main concerned with specific cases and grievances. The United Kingdom agreed to withdraw all troops from United States territory on or before June 1st, 1796. Intercourse across the continental frontier was not to be impeded by either Power. The navigation of American rivers in the territory of either was to be free up to the highest point to which seagoing vessels could proceed. A Commission was to be set up in America to provide "full and complete compensation" for the British creditors, who had waited nearly a dozen years. *Per contra*, Great Britain offered com-

¹ On the American situation see McMaster in *The Cambridge Modern History*, vii. 318 seq.

² *The Cambridge Modern History*, vii. 320.

pensation for damage done to American shipping under the harsh Orders in Council of 1793. United States vessels were authorised to carry on direct trade with British ports in the East Indies (they had done so to a considerable extent already without authorisation) and with British possessions in Europe. The trade between the United States and the West Indies was opened, as Hamilton had urged on Hammond, to small vessels, up to 70 tons burden. The most favoured nation principle was mutually adopted in matters of customs, tonnage and harbour dues. Neither Contracting Party was to entertain in its ports pirates or privateers with letters of marque from an enemy of the other, or to allow its subjects to accept from foreign Princes in time of war letters of marque which might authorise them to prey on the commerce of the other Party. Contraband was more closely defined. It was agreed that enemy property, but enemy property only, might be taken from neutral ships in time of war; the United States hereby abandoning the principle of "free ships, free goods." There were other more detailed clauses dealing with the problems of neutrality, capture, and the exercise of sea power. Finally, in the event of war between the Contracting Parties, the property of individuals was not to be confiscated—a reminiscence of the American Confiscation Acts; merchants might remain and carry on trade in spite of the existence of a state of war; and no reprisals for alleged illegal acts were to be initiated by either Party without notice. It should be added that all the clauses of a general character dealing with the problems of warfare were accepted for twelve years only, except the clause which forbade the confiscation of private property. It may, also, be noted, in the words of an American historian and in anticipation of the war of 1812, that "nothing was said about search, or impressment, or paper blockades, or indemnity for the negroes whom Carleton took away in 1783¹." The British Navigation Code was rendered less watertight by the clauses relating to the West Indies and India; but it was not wrecked. The Treaty, in short, was a *pièce de circonstance*, and as such something of a triumph for British foreign policy: it had few of the elements of a "family compact" broad-based on principle.

Had it been possible for the United Kingdom to have, from the first, an Ambassador to the United States in touch with Washington and his colleagues, as the Ambassadors to the Great Powers were with the Courts to which they were accredited, Anglo-American relations in this critical decade might have worked out differently. For the

¹ *The Cambridge Modern History*, VII. 320.

used on the British side—so much so that he was accused of treachery, whereby the old aristocratic Opposition, with its headquarters in the States of Holland, was greatly strengthened. Under the cumbrous and intricate federal system of the Provinces, the main utility of the office of Stadholder was in time of war. If it did not serve as a rallying point for the people then, there was some presumption that it was of no use. Certainly, it had not so served in 1780-3. William V was dilatory in business. He was neither able nor courageous. He was known to be much influenced by his Prussian wife. He was supposed to have acquired alien sympathies from his English mother. All those who disliked Great Britain or favoured France, and the still larger number who valued above all things the pure Dutch traditions of their Province or their town, were turning against him.

Great Britain was on her guard, even before Peace was signed with the Dutch. "His Majesty," wrote Fox to Sir John Stepney, Ambassador at Berlin, on September 19th, 1783, "is much alarmed at the accounts we receive every day of the state of affairs in Holland. The remaining authority of the House of Orange seems to be in the most dangerous state." In a manner hardly worthy of his position, Fox had asked the advice of Frederick as to "what steps, if any, could with propriety be taken by this Court in the present juncture." Frederick replied that this was a matter on which he could not pretend to give advice. "No notice whatever was taken of the two Courts acting in concert¹." It was a palpable snub. However, in April, 1784, Count Finkenstein, speaking as was assumed for his master, suggested that England should send to the Hague a Minister "who would employ quiet and conciliatory measures²." This was, certainly, not a close description of Harris, whom Pitt sent over seven months later. But Harris was not sent merely to please Berlin.

The situation in the United Provinces required skilled handling. While the "Patriots" were working against the Orange interest, the whole country became engaged in a quarrel with the Emperor Joseph, about treaty rights to which Great Britain was a party. Joseph's passion for what was rational and absolute was stirred by the irrational checks and balances of Low Country politics. "His" Netherlands had been protected against France, his Ally, by Dutch garrisons in the Barrier fortresses. Of these he had got rid during the late War, Great Britain not being in a position to uphold the Barrier Treaty. Now (1784), he

¹ Stepney to Fox, October 11th, 1753.

² Stepney to Carmarthen, April 6th, 1784.

repudiated the "unnatural" arrangement by which the Scheldt was shut, and Antwerp's trade ruined, for the benefit of the Dutch. Also, he revived an old claim to an outlying bit of Dutch territory about Maastricht, which lay conveniently adjacent to lands of his in Limburg. He seized some Dutch forts and set an army in motion late in the year.

It could not be supposed that any Dutch party, least of all the "Patriots," the commercial aristocracy of Holland, would yield to such demands without a fight. As this party was in close relation with France, Carmarthen hoped to see France involved, to her disadvantage, in the quarrel between her friends and her Ally¹. The strain increased throughout the early months of 1785; but in the summer it began to appear that the prospect for France was promising. She would mediate, bring the disputants to terms, and thereby increase both her own prestige and, if the terms were satisfactory to the Dutch, that of the "Patriots" also. That France should stand as protector of Dutch interests in the Scheldt was intolerable to Harris; but this was what he saw coming. Carmarthen's attempts to provoke Austria against France proved futile. Frederick of Prussia could not be induced to come forward as an open supporter of the Dutch, even though he might have been expected to welcome a chance of checkmating Austria. He was waiting on France². Carmarthen tried in vain to move Berlin, as he saw France and Austria coming together again during 1785. "Interested as Great Britain and Prussia must be to watch every move of their respective rivals, so formidably connected," he wrote to Ewart on May 14th, why should they not cooperate "to emancipate the Republic from the shackles of her slavish dependency on France"? Frederick was absorbed in the contemplation of another Habsburg scheme, the proposed exchange of the Austrian Netherlands for Bavaria. When this finally collapsed (June, 1785), he was busy building up his German League of Princes to hold the Imperial Court in check. He was on the whole in favour of the British policy towards the United Provinces; but he was circumspect, timid, rather malicious, and, as has been seen, doubtful of England's resolution and competence. In return for active support in the Dutch matter, not necessarily military, he might have won British assistance for his League of Princes. King George joined it in

¹ See Salomon, *Pitt*, p. 304.

² Joseph Ewart (Chargé d'affaires at Berlin) to Carmarthen, September 18th; November 9th, 1784; April 2nd, 1785.

his Hanoverian capacity, but, as usual with him in such cases, without consulting or informing his British Ministers. Harris and Ewart were anxious to use the League as a steppingstone to an Anglo-Prussian alliance. The Cabinet was less eager. Both the desire not to commit Great Britain too far prematurely, and a justifiable suspicion of Frederick's interest and sincerity, held them back, as the September Instructions for Cornwallis show. But had Frederick responded, something might have been accomplished. He contented himself with his discouraging survey of Europe and his double-edged compliments to Pitt.

Harris worked desperately. He interviewed the Stadholder—and would have felt happier if he “would act one half as well as he spoke”—as well as the Princess—and got the impression of his having warned Berlin that open intervention might hurt the Orange cause; and he interviewed every accessible person of importance. The Prince lacked all “firmness and conduct.” Some months before, he had talked of selling his estates and retiring to Germany—“a resolution,” said Harris, “which, if ever he carries it into execution, will compleat his character.” As with other nervous Princes, King Charles's head entered into his conversation. Harris thought that “the more temperate members of the aristocratical party,” though hostile to Orange, disliked dependence on France. So he had long discussions with the Directors of the Dutch East India Company, as a result of which he suggested that Great Britain might guarantee all their Eastern possessions, and so prevent them from becoming centres of French influence¹. But to no purpose. Preliminaries of an agreement between the United Provinces, France and the Emperor were signed in September. They showed, said Harris, “the low and abject situation to which this Republic is reduced.” He worked on, nevertheless, to block the completion of the Treaty, through friends in Zealand, the most Anglophil of the Provinces. Correspondence with Ewart convinced him that “the King of Prussia was acting a hollow and insidious part,” but that his heir, Frederick William Prince of Prussia, took a more lively interest in his sister's fate². Yet nothing but words came from Berlin. The States-General rated them at their true value, and proceeded to consider proposals for removing the arms of the House of Orange from regimental colours, postwaggons and public proclamations.

¹ Harris to Carmarthen, August 2nd, 9th, 16th; September 2nd, 9th, 13th, 1785. Also, a private letter of March 11th, quoted in Rose, *Pitt*, 1. 309.

² To Carmarthen, September 27th (two despatches of the same date).

On November 8th and 10th, 1785, two Treaties signed at Fontainebleau registered Harris's failure. Joseph withdrew. He recognised the absolute rights of the United Provinces over the lower Scheldt, which was all that mattered, and agreed to abandon his claims on Maastricht in return for a money payment. To win the Dutch, France undertook to pay almost half the sum herself. In return, the Dutch Envoys signed the second Treaty, a political and commercial Alliance with France. The two Powers were to aid one another, if either were attacked, by land and sea; neither was to carry on negotiations to the detriment of the other; and in matters of trade a "most favoured nation" system was established between them.

On the day on which the first Treaty was signed, Carmarthen wrote to Harris the threatening despatch already quoted. The Dutch were, he said, running a fearful risk, Britain "could destroy their credit or annihilate their very soil. Desperate and distasteful as such a step would be, it sure would be justifiable and I trust be effected (and the attempt I think could scarcely fail) without remorse or hesitation¹." He approved a proposal of Harris's for the presentation of a memorial of protest by the British Ambassador to the States-General, a most unusual proceeding as between independent Powers. And he authorised Harris to do what that active Minister had done already—impress the risks they were running on the Dutch traders, who "would be the first to suffer and the last to be recompensed" in case of war². Nevertheless, the Treaty of Alliance with France was ratified at Christmas, 1785.

The months from January to August, 1786, were the blackest of Harris's mission to the Hague. "It is not on the cards at this moment to reclaim this country. Everything...concurs to throw it into the arms of France" (March 31st). Yet hope must not be abandoned. At all costs, by combinations somehow to be devised, England must manage "to disentangle the Republic from her present connexion with France and to restore her to her former treaties with England" (June 13th). From Prussia there was no hope. "His Prussian Majesty is only a friend to the Stadtholder by affinity—and not politically so—and...providing his Niece enjoy the honours usually attached to the Office, he is very indifferent as to the preservation of its privileges" (August 1st). This was so. The King had told Viscount Dalrymple, British Ambassador at Berlin, in the previous December, that he

¹ Carmarthen to Harris, November 8th.

² To Harris, November 17th.

hoped to see the title of Stadholder secured to his Niece's husband, "but not a shadow of power, nor did he expect it." It could not be helped, he said. France must not be provoked¹.

Harris was troubled, also, by the silences and apparent indifference of Pitt. He wished him to write and encourage the rump of the "English" party among the merchants of the United Provinces. "Is it impossible to move him who speaks so well, to write one poor line to these sound shillings and pence men?" Such was his postscript to a letter for Carmarthen in July². Pitt's silence and apparent indifference were due, in part, to preoccupation and overwork; in part, to a certain insularity, natural to a very young man with no first-hand knowledge of Continental problems; in part, to his lack of Harris's flaming hatred of France; and in part, it may confidently be assumed, to his wish at that moment to avoid any appearance of hostility towards her. If Carmarthen ever asked him to write a "poor line," there was an excellent reason for refusal. The French secret service was well organised. A letter to be communicated even to reputed friends was unlikely to remain hidden. And Pitt was just concluding with France a Commercial Treaty most advantageous to British interests. The signatures were attached to it by William Eden, whose name it generally bears, and Gerard de Rayneval on September 26th, 1786.

In the eighteenth article of the Treaty of 1783, France and England had agreed to nominate, without delay, Commissioners to draw up a commercial treaty, "on the basis of reciprocity and mutual convenience," this treaty to be completed not later than January 1st, 1786. The initiative had come from Vergennes. Vergennes, it has been said, had no trace of genius³. He had, however, immense diplomatic experience and an enlightened commonsense. He had served for nearly ten years in Portugal; for five in Germany; for nearly fifteen at Constantinople. He had created the modern French Foreign Office⁴. All his experience had failed to assimilate him fully to the ordinary diplomatic type of his day. True, he could play the diplomatic game with any man. He had led France into the American War, and had won back for her from Great Britain, by a timely use of force, the position among the Powers—but not the territory, which in the Seven Years' War Great Britain had by force taken from her. He had advised Lewis XVI against a policy of mere spatial aggrandisc-

¹ Dalrymple to Carmarthen, December 3rd, 1785.

² B.M. Add. MSS. 28061. Quoted in Rose, *Pitt*, I, 275.

³ Sorel, I, 297: "*Turgot avait du génie, Vergennes n'en avait point.*"

⁴ Above, p. 146 n. 2.

ment. In memoirs presented to his master, he had protested with passion against the partitions, exchanges and mechanical roundings-off of territory, which occupied most of the time of the German chanceries. France, he said, had "in herself everything that constitutes real power (*la puissance réelle*)¹." Of course, he desired that she should influence—his enemies would have said dominate—her lesser neighbours; but the notion of annexing them was abhorrent to him. Between France and Great Britain, he desired mutual respect and free intercourse, not the alternations of actual with commercial war which had marked the last century. He once told a colleague that, if he could annihilate England, he would not do it. But there was nothing that he would not do "to bring about a change in her jealous policy, which damages both us and her, and which, if well examined, proves to be folly." And he added, with a wonderful insight: "for a century and a half we have been ruining one another to enrich Europe, to strengthen Powers from whom we have nothing to fear or to create brandnew Powers. As a consequence, we lose weight in proportion as the others grow, and we shall end by making them our equals²." In 1783, he had been determined to begin an era of more neighbourly relations; and he had been delighted to find in Shelburne a statesman who needed no compulsion³. Each had a strain of the cosmopolitan idealism of the century and a contempt for some of the idols of the marketplace.

Vergennes was far too good a diplomatist to miss such opportunities for extending the moral dominion of France as Dutch and other affairs offered him. His agents throughout the world played the game for influence as Harris played it, each side calling the play of the other "intrigue." In 1785 he approved the recreation of a French East India Company. British statesmen suspected that this Company would exploit the new connexion with Holland, and possibly amalgamate with the Dutch Company⁴. Therefore, Harris paid special attention to the Dutch Directors. These intrigues, suspicions and counter-intrigues did not improve the prospects of the commercial treaty. Further, Pitt was no doubt anxious that fiscal union between

¹ Sorel, I. 313-5. This was in 1777.

² These sayings were credited to him by Hennin after his death. (Doniol, *Le Comte de Vergennes et P. M. Hennin*, pp. 103-4.) They may not be verbally correct, but they are in accordance with his conduct.

³ Pitt was Shelburne's Chancellor of the Exchequer; but Rose (*Pitt*, I. 325) has "found no sign of his opinions on the subject" of Vergennes' proposals and Shelburne's reception of them.

⁴ Harris's correspondence contains many references to this suspicion.

England and Ireland should precede changes in Great Britain's external economic relations¹. His Irish attempt and failure were not complete until June, 1785. By that time, Vergennes was putting pressure on Great Britain to carry out Article 18. Early in 1784, a British Commissioner had been sent to Paris; but he had been kept waiting months for Instructions. In March, 1785, he was still without a reply to letters written in the previous September and November. But he had been advised to reject the French proposal for negotiations on the basis of mutual most favoured nation treatment, since the British Government was not prepared to abandon the specially favoured treatment of Portuguese wines stipulated for in the Methuen Treaty of 1703. Vergennes retaliated by arguing that if the new treaty was not completed, as agreed, by January 1st, 1786, the existing commercial arrangements between the two countries arising out of the Treaty of Utrecht must lapse. He next instigated a series of edicts interfering with British exports to France, of which the most serious was one of July 10th, 1785, forbidding the import of foreign linens, cottons and muslins. This was suspended, in consequence of a protest from London; but it showed what England might expect if her delays continued. Vergennes was well within his rights; for French silks had been prohibited in England since 1765. With considerable forbearance, however, he agreed to waive the claim to negotiate on a basis of complete reciprocity and most favoured nation treatment, on condition that negotiations were really opened. This was in October, 1785². Two days before, he had prohibited the import of iron, steel and cutlery.

Pitt was already preparing to send over a highly qualified agent to treat with France; but he showed himself strangely dilatory in the whole business. While he delayed, Vergennes secured his Treaty, and most favoured nation terms, from the United Provinces. At Pitt's request, he now agreed to extend the "period of grace" for the British Treaty by six months, and eventually by twelve. Having gained time for consideration, Pitt instituted elaborate enquiries, partly by his new Committee of Council on Trade, partly by the agent whom he selected: William Eden, the future Lord Auckland. Eden, now in his forty-second year, had a varied political experience, no excessive tenacity of political friendship or principle, but great

¹ This is Role's suggestion (*Pitt*, I, 328). It lacks documentary evidence, but is inherently probable.

² Vergennes to Barthélemy (the French representative in London), October 13th. Salmon, *Pitt*, p. 212.

whether it could bear French competition at all; and so on¹. The representatives of most British industries were confident in their own competitive efficiency, Wedgwood in particular; but the silk manufacturers, although they boasted of giving employment to nearly 200,000 people, maintained that, for them, the choice was merely between continued prohibition of French silks and ruin. Arrived in Paris with all his material, Eden was surprised to find that the French Ministers were not equally well prepared. He suspected that, in consequence, they would aim at a vague sweeping kind of treaty, avoiding, so far as possible, the dangers which might result from pitting their relative ignorance against his carefully acquired knowledge. He intended to make that knowledge tell; and no doubt he succeeded. Vergennes' final disclaimer of all interest in the exact amount of immediate gain or loss from the Treaty seems sincere; but, in view of its unpopularity among French manufacturers and its unquestionably painful operation on French industry, the disclaimer might be interpreted as a veiled admission of failure, a half-apology for his agents' inability to beat Eden on his own ground. There had been no elaborate enquiry among experts. A single official, the Inspector-general of Manufacturers, appears to have furnished all the technical information on the industrial side.

This apparent neglect was, however, mainly the result, not of oversight, but of principle. Vergennes, with no parliamentary criticism to fear, could take risks and incur unpopuliarities such as Pitt became every year more reluctant to face. His right-hand man, G. de Rayneval, strongly influenced by physiocratic thought, stated dogmatically that the most useful and solid trade was that in agricultural produce; that the interests of industry were secondary; that it was an economic blunder for a nation to aim at complete industrial self-sufficiency; that an industry which could not maintain itself without high tariffs was not worth maintaining; and that prohibition was in all circumstances vicious. If he could widen the market for French agricultural produce—that is, for French wines—he was relatively indifferent as to Eden's successful bargaining about woollens and porcelain and silk and hardware and Birmingham "toys". He was aware that the years immediately following the Treaty upon which he was engaged might be difficult years for French industry. He was planning means for obviating these difficulties, including the intro-

¹ "Evidence for commercial treaty with France," B.M., Add. MSS. 34462 (Auckland Papers).

duction of English methods. He had hopes at this time that no less a firm than Boulton and Watt might be induced to transfer their business across the Channel.

The French negotiators were, also, fully conscious of the shattered state of the French finances. This was what Vergennes had in mind when he spoke of commercial relations "serving as a corrective to the warlike passions of our neighbours." He believed that England desired revenge for Yorktown and the Treaty of 1783. He wished to divert her interests from war to commerce, because he thought that France could not afford another war for some considerable time. In the last War he had saved her honour, and at its conclusion had shown moderation. To postpone or avert a fresh war, he was again prepared to give something away. If the English valued above all things what his physiocratic advisers considered relatively worthless, he naturally made no objection.

Before the end of April, Eden was reporting that, in his opinion, France would gain nothing essential through the Treaty beyond a reduced duty on her wines, whereas Great Britain would get rid of all old and new prohibitions and other obstacles to her export trade. He had still difficulties to surmount; and at times he found the very exacting Instructions from home, inspired by Jenkinson at the Council of Trade, difficult of execution. In August, he became nervous because, the French manufacturers having had wind of the course of the negotiations, letters of protest against their ruinous character were pouring in to Calonne, now Controller-general of Finance. Eden saw risk of a fall at the last fence and regretted that it had not been possible to make the pace hotter. Having avoided the fall, he wrote home on the day before signature (September 25th), that he hoped the English manufacturers would, for a time at any rate, moderate their expressions of joy. Fortunately for him, when the news arrived, although the King had "never been seen in such spirits," "the principal merchants in the City did not choose to give an opinion about it," because—so Dorset, Eden's correspondent, held—"anything, if novel, is apt to stupify merchants¹." And as no such agreement ever completely satisfies commercial men, there were some complaints and talk of a sacrificing of British interests. It was Pitt who, in defending the Treaty in the House during February, 1787, against the usual factious Whig opposition, was indiscreet enough to argue that, while advantageous to France, it was still more so to Great Britain.

¹ Dorset to Eden, *Auckland Journals*, 1. 392.

assumed, would try to force her solution, "civil war...might be a very near event¹." In February, Vergennes was succeeded by Montmorin, a much inferior statesman, and the mess of the French treasury was disclosed by Calonne. Harris continued to work hard at propaganda, organising meetings, subsidising journals and pamphleteers, and evidently making progress².

By May, civil war in Holland had practically begun. The "Patriotic" party, by its origin that of the commercial aristocracy, was acquiring a revolutionary and democratic tinge by intercourse with France. Hitherto, the permanent limitation of the powers of the Stadholderate, and perhaps the removal of the undeniably incompetent and universally unpopular Stadholder in favour of his son, had been the measures contemplated. Now, the total abolition of the office was certainly being discussed. This enabled the English party to appeal to old deep-rooted popular sentiment in favour of the House of Orange. Even in the Province of Holland itself, the stronghold of the Patriots, there were Orange elements. The dockers of Amsterdam, for instance, preferred a remote Prince to the local *Mynheers*—capitalistic Patriots—and were accessible to Harris's propaganda. The French Ambassador Vêrac was working, also with success, on the other side. Such external interference in domestic affairs was singularly easy in a state "built up in the most amazing fashion out of Federation, Republic, Monarchy, Crown Property and heritable Privileges," as Clausewitz described the United Provinces at this time³.

The crisis came in June. Both sides had armed. The Prince had about 4000 men; the Patriots a larger, but less compact, body of Free Companies (militia). Some months earlier, the Prince and Princess had left the Hague and the Province of Holland for a safer residence at Nymwegen. But recent changes of opinion encouraged Princess Wilhelmina to think that, by a personal appeal at the Hague, she might yet win a majority of the States-General for the Orange cause. She set out, with a very small following, early on June 28th—spent the night in a peasant's house, a prisoner of the Free Companies of the province of Holland, and returned next day to Nymwegen.

Thereupon, her brother, who had heard an exaggerated report of the insults offered her, sent a threatening despatch to the States of Holland

¹ To Carmarthen, January 2nd, 1787.

² See his correspondence, February-April, *passim*.

³ *Der Feldzug des Herzogs von Braunschweig von 1787*, p. 259; quoted in Heigel, 1. 133.

and ordered his nearest troops to hold themselves in readiness. He was careful to treat the issue as personal, not political, and to explain that he was far from contemplating war. "She wants to drag me into a war," he told one of her confidential servants, "but I will soon show her that I am not to be led by her¹." Yet war might come; and, if it came, he knew he must look to England. For some years, Hertzberg had been advocating an Anglo-Prussian-Dutch "system" at Berlin. The growth of the English party in the Provinces, and the fear of a Dutch democratic republic subservient to France, had roused Pitt and the Cabinet, hitherto not very responsive to Harris's despatches. Harris had been in consultation with Ministers at Whitehall in May. The Cabinet, most certainly, did not want war; but in view of the financial embarrassments of France it was prepared to adopt a course which might conceivably lead to war. Harris went back with a promise of £20,000 for the Orange cause². Next month, he obtained £70,000 more. In July, Carmarthen assumed, almost as a matter of course, the armed intervention of the King of Prussia³; and Pitt sent for the Prussian Ambassador, with whom hitherto he had had few dealings, to tell him that the insult to Princess Wilhelmina concerned her brother only and that France had no right to intervene in any way. It is evident that, if he could get the famous Prussian army in motion, he was prepared to risk war. On August 2nd, he wrote instructing Cornwallis to seize Trincomalee from the Dutch, so soon as hostilities began, in order that the French might not use it as a base, and that the English might—possibly for an attack on the Cape of Good Hope⁴.

Rather better diplomacy on the part of France, a diplomacy such as Vergennes could, almost certainly, have commanded, or a different course of events in Eastern Europe, might have shattered Carmarthen's assumption; for in July Frederick William was trimming. He wanted a settlement without war; and it should have been easy for France to make the Patriots offer satisfactory, but not to them humiliating, terms. This she failed to do, thus giving the impression that she meant to support them through thick and thin; yet, at the end of August, Vêrac, her Ambassador at the Hague, their party's patron and *faiseur*, was recalled and succeeded by St Priest, a representative who was not

¹ Luckwaldt, *Die englisch-preussische Allianz von 1788*, p. 67.

² *Malmesbury Correspondence*, II. 306. Pitt himself was not in favour of a policy which might lead to war: but he agreed to the financial assistance. Rose, I. 360.

³ *Malmesbury Correspondence*, II. 329, July 3rd.

⁴ *Cornwallis Correspondence*, I. 321.

that "there did not seem to remain any degree of ill-humour, tho' there was visible a little awkwardness on occasion of the humiliating terms to which this Court had been obliged to subscribe¹."

But Montmorin told Eden that war had been nearer than might have been supposed. For "exclusive of all objects of internal interest, there had been some opinion of weight that a war was the best mode of finishing the internal troubles which had prevailed at the time of the King of Prussia's march²." The suggestion recurred again and again in France during the next five years; for foreign war, it has been said, was the classical cure for internal troubles³.

Even before Amsterdam had fallen, Harris was pressing the Dutch for an alliance. But with so complex a polity as the United Provinces negotiations were exceptionally slow. In November, while the Prussian troops were beginning to withdraw, the Orange party was consolidating its power by the dismissal of "Patriotic" functionaries. In December, Harris's friend van de Spiegel became Grand Pensionary of the United Provinces. Though a friend, he did not wish to sell his friendship too cheap; and, since in any Anglo-Dutch discussion colonial questions at once came to the front, the Dutch statesman suggested that Great Britain should give back Negapatam⁴. Harris managed to put this suggestion aside. By the end of March, 1788, his draft had passed the States of Holland, and on April 15th, the Defensive Alliance between His Britannic Majesty and Their High Mightinesses the States-General of the United Provinces was signed⁵. A Prusso-Dutch Treaty was signed the same day.

Great Britain and the Provinces promised one another friendship and armed assistance if involved in war, specifying the amount of that assistance. A clause, to which England attached great importance, provided for military and naval cooperation in such an event between the Dutch and British authorities in the East. In case of war with a common enemy, neither was to disarm or make peace without the consent of the other. Great Britain guaranteed to the Prince of Orange the Hereditary Stadholderate of the United Provinces, and the office of Hereditary Governor in every Province, "engaging to maintain that form of Government against all attacks and enterprises, direct or indirect, of whatsoever nature they might be." The contracting

¹ To Carmarthen, November 1st.

² Eden to Carmarthen, November 1st.

³ The point is repeatedly referred to by Sorel.

⁴ Harris's despatches, December and January, *passim*.

⁵ Harris to Carmarthen, April 15th, 1788, enclosing the treaty.

parties agreed to negotiate further about Negapatam. On May 8th, 1788, the Treaty was ratified, and the Dutch skiff appeared to be once more in tow behind the British ship of the line. This, however, was the year in which Mirabeau, in his pamphlet *Aux Bataves sur le Stathouderat*, told the Dutch that England was working through the House of Orange "to turn them into European Indians." In the long run, the reimposition of a personally unpopular and incompetent Stadholder by foreign arms worked as Mirabeau hoped it might—to increase the existing dislike of the office and of the Powers who propped it. It did so the more surely, because Great Britain in fact never opened the promised negotiations about Negapatam.

Brunswick's military promenade to Amsterdam and its brilliant results proved a curse to Prussia. They set her statesmen planning other and greater *coups*, to be brought about by an opportune waving of the Prussian sword, and confirmed her King in his natural inclinations. "When once prevailed upon to exert himself," wrote Joseph Ewart from Berlin about this time¹, "he is by no means deficient in judgement and penetration; but he requires to be roused from his dissipation and inactivity." It might well seem to him, now, that an occasional rousing was enough. Frederick William emerged from the Dutch crisis pledged to Great Britain, by a secret agreement of October 20th, 1787, to maintain the Dutch Constitution. Beyond that point he was not committed; nor was Great Britain. Throughout the winter, both Governments worked at the Dutch Treaties, which in themselves constituted a political *consortium* of the three Powers, if not exactly a Triple Alliance.

For a time, Great Britain had not been anxious to go further. There were once more rumours of a Quadruple Alliance of the Imperial and Bourbon Courts, and Pitt wished to learn what they were worth. The scheme came from Catharine, who during 1787 had partly shown her hand by refusing to renew her Commercial Treaty with Great Britain, while including one with France. She now (late in 1787) sounded Montmorin through Ségur, the French Ambassador at Petrograd. But an alliance with Russia meant for France the sacrifice of three of her oldest diplomatic friendships—those with Sweden, Poland, and the Porte. Montmorin could not bring himself to make such sacrifices: the Quadruple Alliance remained a scheme², and Pitt was for the moment free of that risk.

Intimate relations between Great Britain and Prussia were first post-

¹ To Carmarthen, January 9th, 1785.

² Sorel, I. 322, 323.

Ally. Not because Prussia was abnormally lacking in scruple, if judged by the diplomatic standards of the day; but because her real interests and those of Great Britain lay in such different fields, sustained and active cooperation between the two Powers was always difficult.

Just before the Treaties with the United Provinces were signed, *i.e.* early in April, 1788, Pitt had written down his notion of the form which an Anglo-Prussian alliance might take¹. Putting on one side a definite proposal which had come through Ewart from Hertzberg for joint action in the east, he suggested that a treaty guaranteeing the Dutch settlement should include also a general defensive alliance and guarantee of territories between the two Powers, which might be kept secret so long as the Quadruple Alliance of the Imperial and Bourbon Courts remained incomplete. The Cabinet was more cautious, and decided against the suggested mutual guarantee of territory. It fully agreed that Great Britain ought not to be in any way committed to Hertzberg's territorial speculations. Hertzberg tried again. Again, the British Cabinet raised difficulties and refused to commit itself too deeply², unless Prussia would make very general promises of military assistance. This angered King Frederick William. He told his Minister that he was determined not to employ his troops outside Germany and the Netherlands, and thanked God that he had no need to snatch at alliances³. Within a fortnight he had accepted the Alliance, though not quite on the terms which had provoked this outburst.

His acceptance was the work of Sir James Harris. The Prussian King had an appointment to visit his sister, the Princess of Orange, at her château of the Loo, in the second week of June. Just before he started, Ewart at Berlin was not very confident. The French party in Prussia was active, and Ewart could only express the hope that the King would be "undeceived at Loo⁴." To accomplish this, the full apparatus of diplomacy was brought to bear. King George wrote an appropriate autograph letter to the Princess, which Harris delivered⁵. During the critical day (June 12th), Harris concentrated the whole strength of his trained and impressive personality on the King—and bribed the King's valet to block the access of a hostile personality.

¹ April 2nd, 1788. Pitt MSS. In Salomon, p. 342.

² Carmarthen to Ewart, May 14th, 1788. Hertzberg's proposal to Ewart was dated April 19th. Luckwaldt, pp. 105-6.

³ In a note of May 30th. Salomon, p. 345.

⁴ To Carmarthen, May 31st.

⁵ *Melbourne Correspondence*, II, 120.

Matters were settled between King and Ambassador after midnight during a walk in the gardens, away from the music of the State ball. The King returned to the music, while Harris, with the Minister Alvensleben, spent the small hours of the morning drawing up the Treaty on the basis of one of Hertzberg's drafts. The King looked through the draft at 9 a.m., and signed the Treaty at 2 p.m. on the 13th. Harris despatched his courier to Helvoetsluys, and spent the afternoon going over the European situation with England's new Ally. On the 14th, he must have begun the series of despatches in which he told his Cabinet how it had all been done¹. His rewards were a peerage and the right to bear the Prussian Eagle in his coat of Arms. Meanwhile, from Berlin, Ewart was able to report that "the French emissaries were discarded" and that the Countess Ingelheim—the reigning Mistress—"warmly applauded" the King's conduct².

The Treaty was officially described as provisional. The definitive Treaty was signed by Hertzberg and Ewart, exactly four months later; but not many changes were made in Harris's work. The final Treaty was a Defensive Alliance, the United Kingdom and Prussia pledging themselves to support one another, if attacked, with a force of at least 20,000 men or an equivalent in cash, and to uphold the Dutch Settlement of 1787. As a concession to Frederick William's known prejudice, Prussian auxiliaries were not to be used by Great Britain outside Europe or be shipped to Gibraltar. Secret articles stipulated that the promised contingents should not be furnished, unless the Party attacked had set 44,000 men of its own in motion; and that Prussia might count on the help of a British fleet, should she require it.

Hertzberg acted on the principle that Prussia's policy was to have no policy—she ought to be always adjusting her programmes to a changing world, in order to extract from it the maximum of land and of power. He held to the main objects of his great scheme; but he was prepared to put in operation any lesser, or greater, scheme which circumstances might favour. Now the early course of the War of Russia and Austria against Turkey suggested that the vast conquests of the Imperial Courts, in return for which Prussia was to press for compensations equally vast, might never be achieved. Wars got under way slowly in eastern Europe, and nothing considerable was attempted during 1787. In 1788 disease ravaged the ill-organised Russian armies and the Act of God at sea crippled the fleet of

¹ They are dated June 15th and have been fully utilised by Salomon and Rose.

² To Carmarthen, June 28th.

Sebastopol. It was only at the very end of the year (December 17th) that Oczakoff was carried in a last desperate assault and its population massacred. Austria, by an immense effort, had put 180,000 men into the field, but in scattered and ill-coordinated armies. Disease broke out in them. Their Generals were incompetent, but so, too, was the Emperor, who insisted on retaining the supreme command. So unsuccessful were the early months of the War that in August, when news of the Anglo-Prussian Treaty came, Joseph was writing to Kaunitz that, if Prussia and England joined in, "then the monarchy was lost," and there was nothing to prevent the King of Prussia from "occupying all Bohemia and Moravia and marching on Vienna¹." By September, the Austrians were retreating, leaving the Banat of Temesvar to be ravaged by the Turks and in fear for Transylvania. The Emperor's letters were more despairing than ever. Very naturally, the thought arose in Berlin that Prussia by an opportune show of force—she had already troops massed on the Austrian frontier—might get compensation, though Austria got nothing from her Turkish war but disgrace. Hertzberg began to see the most brilliant prospects opening out for Prussian policy².

For a time, in the summer, Catharine had seemed in even greater danger than Joseph. The chivalrous, autocratic and inconsequent Gustavus III of Sweden had suddenly declared war, come to an understanding with the Turks, and marched on Petrograd through Finland. In the north, Catharine had only a small force and her Cronstadt fleet. The fleet fought an indecisive action and the Empress had horses ready for the journey to Moscow. Then, partly as a result of Russian manipulation, the powerful party among the Swedish nobility and gentry which detested Gustavus, on account of his autocratic home policy, connived at revolts among the troops and desertions of officers. At the same time, the Danes, secretly bound to Russia in case of a Russo-Swedish war, prepared to invade Sweden from Norway and beset Gothenburg. On September 2nd, Carmarthen wrote to Joseph Ewart: "The last accounts which we have received of the situation of the King of Sweden represent his difficulties as much increased, and state the probability of his applying to this Court and that of Berlin, as well as to France, for good offices and mediation." It was most desirable, he added, that England and Prussia should "prevent France having a share in the event," and hinder Russia

¹ August 26th. Quoted in Sorel, I. 526.

² Krauel, *Hertzberg*, p. 43; quoted in Solomon, p. 488.

from becoming supreme in the Baltic¹. Pitt and his colleagues began to see their new Triple Alliance not only preserving for Great Britain that peace which they sincerely prized, but also acting as the great and honoured European peace-maker, the preventer of France, the curb of Russia, the saviour of Sweden and, should she need saving, of Turkey. At Constantinople, Sir Robert Ainslie and his Prussian colleague Dietz were influencing Turkish policy and preparing the way for mediation by the Triple Alliance, when the time for peace-making should come. In the struggle for prestige among the Great Powers mediations had long played an important part. Could Great Britain mediate, so as to save two old dependants of France, Sweden and the Porte, nothing would more clearly demonstrate that to her was already passing that moral leadership of Europe which in 1783 the French seemed to have recovered.

That the Alliance should strike in upon the weakness of its neighbours and thus upset existing territorial arrangements, did not enter into the British conception. The British point of view was expressed clearly, if not concisely, a year later by Leeds (Carmarthen), when Hertzberg's scheme, in a fresh form, had again been put forward. The scheme, he said, went much beyond "the spirit of our Treaty of Alliance, which is purely of a defensive nature and by which, of course, we cannot be considered as in any degree bound to support a system of an offensive nature, the great end of which appears to be aggrandisement rather than security, and which, from its very nature, is liable to provoke fresh hostilities, instead of contributing to the restoration of general tranquillity²."

In the autumn of 1788, Catharine was not in a mood to accept British or any other mediation. She supposed, wrongly³, that Great Britain and Prussia had some hand in the King of Sweden's adventure, and wished to punish him and them. She had saved herself by her own energy and did not intend to be beholden to that "*grandissime politique fr. Ge.*" (*frère George*), as she called Pitt's master in her private correspondence⁴. But, if Catharine was inaccessible, the Court of Copenhagen was not; and there Great Britain was strongly represented, by Hugh Elliot. He was instructed to call off the Danes.

¹ See also Pitt to Grenville, September 1st, 1788: "Our intervention may prevent his (Gustavus) becoming totally insignificant, a dependent upon Russia, and it seems to me an essential point." *Dropmore Papers*, I. 353.

² Leeds to Ewart, June 24th, 1789.

³ The evidence is in Rose, *Pitt*, I. 494-5.

⁴ To Grimm, quoted in Sorel, I. 528.

Mediation between Denmark and Sweden had been offered in a despatch from Carmarthen to Elliot, dated August 15th. The great Minister Bernstorff had seemed well disposed; but the young Prince Royal repeated what Elliot had been told before, that Denmark was bound by treaty to Russia and must stand to her word. This brought Pitt forward in person. A despatch to Elliot drafted by him left this country on September 9th. It criticised Danish policy on the ground that it was certain "to extend the mischiefs of the present war in a manner which cannot fail to excite the most serious attention, and to have a great effect on the conduct, of all those Courts who are interested in the relative situation of the different Powers of the Baltic." Before he received this rather obscurely veiled threat, learning from Ewart that Prussia was in agreement with Great Britain and was contemplating an invasion of Holstein, also that there was imminent risk of Gustavus' accepting French mediation, Elliot crossed to Sweden, to come into personal contact with the King, who, in spite of his high spirit, was almost overwhelmed by external danger and domestic treachery. Abandoning his natural inclination to trust in Sweden's ancient ally France, Gustavus, who knew that time was short, accepted Elliot's magniloquently worded offer without reserve: "Sire, give me your Crown; I will return it to you with added lustre."

The return of the Crown was not entirely Elliot's work. He went at once to the Danish camp, for the Danes were now advancing on Gothenburg; but, at first, he failed to impose mediation upon the Prince Royal. The siege of Gothenburg was prepared; but so was the defence—by Gustavus himself, with the assistance of English sailors from ships then in the port. As the prospect of carrying the town by a *coup de main* seemed over, the Danes accepted a short Armistice, on October 9th. During the period of the Armistice, news of Prussia's threat to Holstein arrived. This strengthened Elliot's hand. In the middle of November, the Armistice was extended for six months and the immediate danger to Sweden was over¹. There was no peace: the state of war continued between Sweden and Russia: Denmark's good faith was doubted; yet, at the close of the year, the Triple Alliance was looking forward with confidence to a general pacification and a satisfactory settlement during 1789. But its members were not agreed as to what constituted a satisfactory settlement. The fall of Oczakoff, following on Sweden's breakdown, closed the year not unsatisfactorily, if not brilliantly, for Catharine. She had the

¹ This account is based on Rose, *Pitt*, I. 495.

patience and the long views of her adopted country. If not Constantinople or Bessarabia in this War, then in the next or in some yet remote war. Only for a moment, during Gustavus' Finland raid, had she ever feared attack—and even then not for Russia proper. Without bitterness or any recrimination, she acquiesced in the change of plan which circumstances seemed to force on her Ally. She wrote to him just before Christmas, and before she can have had the news from Oczakoff, that she would raise no objection at all to his making peace with the Porte, if he so desired. But she would have nothing to do with mediation from any quarter. The view now prevalent at Vienna was put by Kaunitz thus: "so long as Prussia's power has not been curtailed, all the intentions, plans and enterprises of the two Imperial Courts will always be hindered and destroyed by her¹." It was therefore necessary, if in any way possible, to settle accounts with Prussia. On New Year's Day 1789, the chances of doing so in the near future would have appeared, to any cool observer, scanty.

The relations between Berlin and the Imperial Courts had just been complicated by events in Poland. For years diplomatists had anticipated dissolution for this country, "precluded from every exterior commerce by its neighbours and deprived of every interior improvement by its Constitution²." Now, the Poles, hoping to be relieved of Russian pressure by the withdrawal of Catharine's armies for use elsewhere, initiated a constitutional reform. The Diet met on October 6th, 1788, and prepared for action by "confederating" itself. By "confederation" it acquired the power to make decisions by an ordinary majority vote, instead of by that unanimity, the need for which, under the old Polish Constitution, had done more than anything else to ruin the country³. Catharine, who was in fact compelled to remove her troops from Polish soil, called to Poland over her shoulder, so to speak, that she would regard the least change in the Constitution as a breach of treaty (November, 1788). Prussia egged the Poles on to defy her, and the work of the Diet went forward. Early in December, the Diet decided to enter into negotiations with a view to a Prussian alliance, and to send missions to the European Courts to explain the contemplated reforms in the Polish Constitution. Thereupon, the Prussian representative at Warsaw, Lucchesini, let it be known, about Christmastime, that his master would guarantee

¹ Martens, *Traité de la Russie avec l'Autriche*, II. 188-9, quoted in Sorel, I. 528.

² Viscount Dalrymple (from Warsaw), October 1st, 1782.

³ There is an excellent series of despatches on the work of the Great Diet from David Hailes who took over the embassy from Whitworth in November, 1788.

the independence of the Republic without interfering in its internal affairs. Prussia at once became popular among the patriots of Warsaw. They began, also, to approach the British representative and ask whether, if they made an alliance with Prussia, England would accede. The British representative was civil; but, not seeing what commercial advantage England could derive from a Polish alliance, with Prussia astride the trade route down the Vistula, and inclining to the view that Great Britain could only get any such advantage by working through Berlin, he advised his Polish friends to lean on Prussia, or else "they would never be able to effect any purpose, either commercial or political¹." Approached again, rather later (March, 1789), he advised his Government that to step into Polish affairs might endanger relations with Prussia; that it would mean for England "taking the Republic under her protection"; that this was "undoubtedly the wish of the Poles and their chief design in proposing their commerce to us"; but that he was very doubtful how far we ought, "to engage for their independence" or incur "the danger arising from the protection of a sort of new Colonies²." The despatch, though not that of a Cabinet Minister, reflects perfectly the Polish problem, as seen from London³.

In these opening months of the great year of Revolution, Prussia was encouraging revolutions wherever she could in the Habsburg dominions, which contained hardly one contented province, while blessing officially what Catharine called revolution in Poland. Prussian agents in Hungary were working on the pride and dissatisfaction of the Magyar leaders. In Galicia, they were explaining the benefits of reunion with a reformed Poland. In the Austrian Netherlands, they were blowing the fires of that revolution of Brabant which preceded the revolution of France, and gave half its title to Camille Desmoulins' first revolutionary journal⁴. Hertzberg, so a French agent reported from Berlin, wanted to push his master into action and glory, but was opposed by the courtiers and favourites: "all that lot are most anxious that the King of Prussia should not escape them, which would happen inevitably if that monarch went to lead his armies. So these people and the mistress are all for the maintenance of peace—and England still more so⁵." To Great Britain, at least, he did justice.

Among all the revolutions, actual or projected, that which touched

¹ Hailes to Carmarthen, February 8th, 1789.

² Hailes to Carmarthen, March 27th, 1789. The English Alliance was a favourite scheme of the Prince Sapieha of those days. Hailes to Carmarthen, July 13th, 1789.

³ See below, p. 188.

⁴ *Les Révolutions de France et de Brabant*.

⁵ Report of the Comte d'Esterno, April 21st, 1789, in Sorel, I. 531.

Great Britain most nearly was the revolution of Brabant. Brabant, like all the other duchies and counties which formed the Austrian Netherlands, had inherited its own customs and constitution; and, until Joseph's day, the Habsburgs had respected this inheritance. No new taxes could be levied without the consent of the Provincial Estates, and the established taxes were voted from year to year. The country, as a whole, was passionately Catholic, though French philosophy had made headway in educated circles. The combination of autocratic tendencies, a striving after governmental uniformity, and a definitely anti-clerical strain in the Josephine system, had provoked all sections of Belgian society. The crisis began when Joseph attempted, by edicts dated January 1st, 1787, to introduce a centralised bureaucratic system for the whole country. Within four months, the Estates of Brabant had declined to vote the taxes, and the Council of Brabant had refused to accept dissolution. A lawyer demagogue, Henri van der Noot, called the men of Brussels to arms. On May 30th, the ancient militia of the gilds, swollen by peasants from the neighbouring villages, overawed the Regent and her husband—Marie Christine, Joseph's sister, and Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen. The Government on the spot gave way; but, in the autumn, Joseph sent a soldier to enforce discipline. In January, 1788, the first blood was shed by the troops, while dispersing a mob in the streets of Brussels.

Joseph supposed that he had won and went forward with his reforms, especially the educational and ecclesiastical. In the course of 1788, opposition and refusals to vote taxes came from the Estates of Flanders and Hainault also. This opposition Joseph once more set himself to crush. By June, 1789, just before the fall of the Bastille, he supposed that he had succeeded. "At last we have won our game in Brabant," he wrote to his sister on the 26th¹. In truth, the losing game for the Habsburg rule in the Low Countries had just entered on its final stage.

The English view of the Belgian situation was stated very clearly by King George, in a letter to the Duke of Leeds, later in the year. It would never, he said, be in the interests of Great Britain, "either that the Emperor should become absolute, or that a Democracy should be established there, as either must probably unite that country more with France²." During August, Pitt had drawn up a remarkable

¹ Heigel, *Deutsche Geschichte*, I. 199.

² George III to Leeds, December 1st, 1789. *Leeds Papers*, quoted in Salomon, p. 461.

memoir on the whole position, as a basis for replies to suggestions from Prussia that Great Britain should encourage revolution in Belgium and Galicia, with a view to their ultimate separation from Austria¹. Galicia, as it touched English interests, he put on one side in few and significant words. "The object of increasing Poland with a view to the extension of our commerce" he wrote, was "too remote and contingent to be relied upon." But the Belgian question was of another order. The prevention of a union of Belgium with France was an object "worth the risk, or even the certainty," of a war. But the mere creation of an independent Belgian State—one of the possible results of supporting the Belgian patriots—was not a British interest. Our sole direct interest was to keep Belgium in dependence on Holland and ourselves. The *status quo ante*, a half-independent Belgium, not too docile under Austrian rule, suited us perfectly; but he recognised the difficulties in the way of its maintenance, and so came to a rather lame conclusion. He might have mentioned that the main cause why Great Britain, a few years earlier, had not looked favourably on Joseph's scheme for exchanging the Low Countries against Bavaria was the reasonable belief that a small independent Belgian State was far more likely to fall permanently under French influence than a group of Belgian Provinces, laxly ruled by a remote but powerful Prince, who could make his voice heard in the counsels of Europe. An alternative to independence or the maintenance of the *status quo* was the union of Belgium with Holland. This suggestion came from the Belgian leader van der Noot. Noot was not a democrat of the '89 type—the leader of the growing democratic party was his rival, Vonck—but a clerical and an upholder of the old Provincial privileges. Driven from home by Joseph's temporary success in 1789, he visited van de Spiegel, the Pensionary of the United Provinces, went later to Berlin, and sent an agent to London. How sincere his proposal was, or what weight should be assigned to such schemings of a party leader in exile, may be left undecided. He undoubtedly made the suggestion to van de Spiegel that a son of the Prince of Orange should be nominated Regent of Belgium². The proposal was

¹ It is in the *Leeds Papers*, B.M. Add. MSS. 28068, and is dated August 27th. A German translation is in Salomon, p. 453 sqq.

² *Résumé des Négociations qui accompagnèrent la révolution des Pays-Bas Autrichiens*, by L. B. J. van de Spiegel, 1841, quoted in Heigel, *op. cit.* 1. 199. Van der Noot's agent in England was a certain van Roode. Van de Spiegel mentioned the scheme for Belgian independence, but apparently not the Regency scheme, to the British Minister, Alleyne Fitzherbert. Fitzherbert was "not a little surprised that... he could condescend to listen for a single instant, to a scheme which to my mind

weighed in London and known in Paris. A French agent in England reported it, in what seems a distorted form, in the course of September. England, he said, had for a time played with the idea of uniting the two countries and attaching the new composite State to the German Empire, as an additional electorate¹. In his August memorandum, Pitt had in fact considered the scheme, and had dismissed it. It appeared to him, he wrote, that "the difference of religion and the clashing interests of commerce, particularly with respect to the navigation of the Scheldt, seemed to make that project difficult, if not impracticable." Nothing more was heard of it for years.

Discussing the possibility of an ultimate war with France on some Low Countries' issue, Pitt stated that he would rather become involved in such a war, "having the Emperor and Holland with us, and Prussia not against us," than run the risk of forcing it on now, and so driving France and Austria into a joint war with England, the United Provinces and Prussia. He had not yet come to understand the new France, nor foreseen that henceforward Franco-Austrian cooperation would be an impossibility. His conclusion of the whole matter was to wait, but to assure the Belgian insurgents that Great Britain would not allow the Emperor to destroy their Constitution.

Pitt did not anticipate any immediate complications with the French over the Belgian question; but he thought that, if "either the rashness of their councils, or the enthusiasm of the present spirit which prevails among them should lead them to measures of this nature, a war would be in any case inevitable." The sentence contains one of the earliest hints by a European statesman of a possible French war of democratic propaganda. That France might be plunged into war by the partisans of the Old Order, with a view to distracting attention from internal trouble, was a commonplace of diplomatic speculation². Pitt's representatives and agents in the Belgian Provinces kept the Foreign Office well informed as to every move of the French and democratic parties there³; but so late as August, 1789, at least, and, in the minds of most statesmen, down to a much later date, the

appears wild and chimerical in the extreme" (to Leeds, July 10th, 1789). Nor does van der Noot appear to have broached the Regency scheme at Berlin (see Ewart to Carmarthen, September 5th, 1789, reporting his proposals there). Pitt's serious discussions of it suggest that his agent pressed it in London.

¹ Report of La Luzerne, September 29th, 1789, quoted in Sorel, II. 60.

² There are many such suggestions: for example, the discussion between the British representative and the Spanish Minister Florida Blanca reported by the former. Wm. Eden to Carmarthen, March 30th, 1789.

³ See the F.O. Correspondence, Flanders, 1789, *passim*.

possibility of French democratic propaganda being conducted by the sword seemed remote and in no way dangerous. What might be called the correct diplomatic opinion during 1789 undoubtedly was that for years France, whatever she might do, would involve no real danger to anyone. William Eden, for example, writing to his brother on September 29th, said it was "beyond any speculation that in our time France should again make the same appearance among nations that she has made...I fairly and sincerely wish to see order restored:—she is no longer an object of alarm; and her prosperity would now be very compatible with ours, which certainly is at this hour far beyond what the nation has ever experienced." He added, a month later: "The troubles of France have increased, so as to render that unhappy country very interesting as to its interior, but probably for a long period of little importance with regard to its external, politics¹." Eden was a representative observer, cool, experienced and intimately acquainted with French affairs². Other cool heads were of the same opinion. "The situation of France," Ewart reported from Berlin³, "seems to have made the Empress of Russia fairly sensible that no reliance whatever can be placed on the power or influence of that country at least for many years." The Court of Berlin, also, was persuaded that—"the great popular revolution in France will prevent that country effectually from interfering in any shape in favour of the Imperial Courts⁴."

Hertzberg no longer felt any fear of that Quadruple Alliance which had haunted his first and great master. He could go forward, if Great Britain would. Throughout the latter part of 1788 and the whole of 1789, Anglo-Prussian diplomacy is one long struggle between Prussia's forward policy and the British conception of the Triple Alliance. Hertzberg's plans evolve and shift. His master's military enthusiasm flares up, and dies down, and flares up again. The British Foreign Office reiterates that "it is impossible to pledge this country beforehand to the consequences of measures which go beyond the limits of a Defensive Alliance⁵." By May, 1789, Frederick William

¹ Wm. Eden to Morton Eden, September 29th and October 20th, 1789, Auckland MSS., B.M. Add. 34429.

² By April, 1790, however, Eden had become alarmed at what he called the French "enthusiasm of giving what they called liberty to all nations." To Sir R. M. Keith, printed in *Memoir of Sir R. M. Keith*, II. 270.

³ To Leeds, October 20th, 1789.

⁴ Ewart to Leeds, July 28th, 1789.

⁵ Leeds to Ewart, September 14th, 1789, following the lines of Pitt's August Memorandum.

was writing to his Ambassador in London that he was losing all patience and did not know what to think of this indifference of the British Cabinet, which he had not deserved. "There was no such delay and indifference shown on my side, when the Dutch affairs were under consideration¹." When the Bastille had fallen, Prussia tried to scare England into activity; not by suggesting that France might begin a war of democratic propaganda, but by suggesting a Franco-Prussian alliance—the French, free from autocracy, might cast off the Austrian connexion, and return to their true interests and to their old relations with Prussia². England was not frightened. Her Minister had just stated once more that "she could not be considered as in any degree bound to support a system of an offensive nature³."

Prussia then tried the argument that she need not support it very actively. The King himself told Ewart, in October, that in "case of his being committed with Austria, either separately or in conjunction with Russia, relative to the affairs either of Poland or of Turkey, he did not pretend that England should become a party in the War; *mais qu'elle voulut seulement lui tenir le dos libre, du côté de la France*, and continue to cooperate in maintaining the neutrality of Denmark⁴."

At this time, Frederick William was desirous of war, Hertzberg eager for a diplomatic triumph, but apparently not for war. The King was in high spirits at the successes of the Belgian insurgents, successes which culminated in the return of van der Noot with triumph to Brussels, a joint repudiation of the Habsburgs by the Estates of Flanders and Brabant, and the junction of the other Provinces with them at the end of the year. "He is so over-elated that he thinks of nothing less than depriving the House of Austria both of the Netherlands and Galicia," Ewart wrote on November 28th. His Minister at Constantinople was working for a Turkish Treaty, a Treaty which was signed hurriedly and, as Hertzberg thought, with an amazing lack of foresight in the drafting, on January 31st, 1790. During December the Polish Diet approved the preliminary arrangements with Prussia which ripened next year into the *traité d'amitié et d'union* of March, 1790. These two negotiations explain Frederick William's reference to "the affairs of Poland and of Turkey." The Polish Treaty was the starting-point for the series of events which

¹ To Alvensleben, May 4th. Salomon, p. 450.

² To Alvensleben, July 31st. Salomon, p. 450.

³ Leeds to Ewart, June 24th. The despatch quoted above, p. 183.

⁴ Ewart to Leeds, October 17th.

led up to the Second Partition; but, at the time of its signature, Prussia was not planning partition. All her statesmen were determined to secure, by any means, at least the key-towns of Thorn and Danzig; but the ruling design in 1789-90 was that for compensating Poland at Austria's expense by the gift of Galicia. In gratitude, Poland was to pass from the Russian sphere of influence into that of Prussia. This plan did not allow sufficiently for the strength and resource of Catharine, or for the storms which were blowing up from the west.

At the close of 1788 Catharine had hoped that George III's insanity and the Regency of the Prince of Wales might bring Fox back to power. She approached Fox through Woronzow, her Ambassador in London, and expressed the conviction that he and the Prince would not allow themselves to be dragged at the heels of Prussia¹. But King George's recovery (February) left Pitt stronger than ever; so that door was closed. However, the succession of a weak Sultan, Selim II, in April, 1789, raised hopes in Petrograd for the campaigns of that year. They proved, in fact, most successful. Joseph's armies recovered. The Danubian Provinces—Bessarabia, Moldavia and Wallachia—were invaded, and by the end of 1789 the original postulate for Hertzberg's compensation schemes, that the Imperial Courts would be in a position to claim much Turkish territory at the end of the War, seemed to have become valid. Hence, Frederick William's desire to utilise the Belgian revolt to the utmost, and to blood his fine army on Austria while the mass of Joseph's troops were on the Danube. British troops he neither needed nor expected, but he required the British fleet, for Denmark was not to be trusted. She had not yet made peace and, thanks to her passive assistance, Russia was in control of the Baltic. Prussia, therefore, hoped that Great Britain's firm wish to reestablish the *status quo* in the Baltic, and to keep France in check, would suffice to ensure her cooperation at least long enough for the Prussian sword, or the threat of the Prussian sword, to do its work.

Great Britain was exceedingly cautious, but correct. At the end of 1789, she was given an opportunity by the Imperial Courts of throwing over Prussia altogether. They sounded her as to the terms on which she would agree to an eastern peace². This offer she put aside: she must act with her Allies, she said. But as the offer indicated a desire for peace, it confirmed the British Cabinet in its policy of using the Triple Alliance as a peace-making and conservative combination. All that Frederick William, to his annoyance, was able

¹ *Roce, Pitt*, I. 509.

² Details in Salmon, p. 405.

to secure in relation to the Netherlands was a Convention, signed at Berlin on January 9th, 1790, by which the three Powers declared their joint interest in the Belgian Provinces; their resolve to uphold Belgian liberties; and their willingness to recognise Independence, should Independence become quite evident¹. In spite of its annoyance, the Court of Berlin made a swift calculation and fell into line. This was the calculation: that the Triple Alliance, taking its cue from Great Britain would come forward with a proposal for a general peace on *status quo ante* terms: that the Imperial Courts would be too proud to accept: and that Prussia would thus secure her war, her compensations, and her Ally².

Early in the morning of February 20th, 1790, Joseph II died at Vienna. He had worked to the end at the task of government which had now broken him—signing documents that same night. His wiser, cooler, more diplomatic brother Leopold, the liberal-minded Grand-duke of Tuscany, was his heir. Two days after the news of Joseph's death reached Florence, Leopold summoned the British Resident, Hervey, to a private interview in the evening. He told his visitor that he wanted peace, and that Hervey was to state this emphatically to his own Court. He referred to the unhappy Alliance with Russia and the sacrifice of the natural Austrian friendship with England. Let England mediate and save him from a breach with Prussia. He would dearly like a defensive alliance with England. He praised her correct and reserved handling of the Belgian revolution, and said—with seeming sincerity—that no nation in Europe was now so highly esteemed. France, he added, was laid aside for years. For himself, he cared for no conquests. He would make peace tomorrow. Russia and the Porte were war-weary, and would no doubt concur. To the Belgians he had made offers which they could not refuse: if desired, he would accept England and Prussia as guarantors of the Belgian liberties. To the Magyars, also, he would restore their ancient customs and liberties. As for Poland—he would give back his share of it tomorrow, if the other Partitioning Powers would do the same. Hervey left the presence late at night, with Leopold's parting protestations of friendship in his ears³.

¹ Ewart to Leeds, January 9th, 1790.⁷ For the King's annoyance, Ewart to Leeds, February 22nd.

² *Minute au Roi*, March 5th, 1790, and the King's reply (Salomon, p. 465). Compare the unexpectedly cordial reception given to a despatch from Leeds of February 26th, as reported by Ewart to Leeds, March 8th.

³ The report is in the Leeds MSS., dated February 28th. A full summary in Salomon, pp. 467-9.

Nothing could have been more welcome to the English Cabinet than Hervey's report. "It seems highly expedient," Leeds wrote at once to Ewart, "to communicate to his Prussian Majesty in the strictest confidence some very interesting information we have received respecting the general views of the King of Hungary¹." The information followed, with hopeful estimates of the new Sovereign, and of his sincerity. These estimates were shortly confirmed by the shrewd and humorous British Ambassador at Vienna, Sir Robert Murray Keith. "I have every reason to be persuaded of the sincerity of his pacific professions, and it appears to me that he uses his best endeavours to restore the general tranquillity." But as a Scotsman and a soldier, Keith added: "It may not however be amiss to remark that with a brave army of above three hundred thousand effective men...and with a population as well as money sufficient to keep it up to that strength, he may be supposed to be able to maintain...a vigorous war against Prussia...particularly if that war shall be made (as every appearance seems to prognosticate) on a plan merely defensive²."

Campaigning had now begun, and what Keith anticipated is clear. Leeds had followed up his letter to Berlin of March 16th by another, in which he stated categorically that "it would be impossible for this country to give any expectation of supporting Prussia in a contest" waged to tear Galicia from Austria³. The Prussian Court was for a moment dismayed. Should Leopold act as reasonably as he spoke, and accept the *status quo*, there would be neither war nor compensations⁴. There was talk of British treachery at Berlin. But having secured his Turkish and Polish treaties, considering that Russia was far away, the King, after much vacillation, decided to risk Great Britain's defection and stand by Hertzberg's Galician plans, on the ground that either he would get something by them, or they would provoke Austria to war. He arranged "to have his whole army on the war establishment about the middle of next month," as Ewart wrote in April. "This has been judged necessary on every account and particularly as very considerable corps of Austrian troops are already assembled in Bohemia and Moravia and are daily receiving reinforcements⁵."

¹ Leeds to Ewart, March 16th, 1790.

² Keith to Leeds, April 5th, 1790. Prince Henry of Prussia, a constant enemy of Hertzberg, also thought that Austria would fight a successful defensive war. Heigel, *op. cit.* p. 255.

³ Leeds to Ewart, March 30th.

⁴ For details of Prussian opinion see Salomon, pp. 470-1. See also Lecky, vi, 127 sqq.

⁵ Ewart to Leeds, April 19th, 1790.

Leopold wanted peace; but, as Keith had hinted, he was not prepared for humiliation. Perhaps his resolution was stiffened by the maritime quarrel about Nootka Sound which had suddenly broken out between Great Britain and Spain. It might give the former occupation. But, as he already knew that she would not support Prussia in a war for Galicia, this must have been a secondary consideration. He continued warlike preparations; but he wrote most reasonable letters to Berlin¹. In June, Frederick William moved to Schönwalde on the Silesian frontier, whither Ewart followed him, so as to keep in touch². The King was growing impatient. "It is ridiculous to lose so much time, when you have an army like mine," he wrote to Hertzberg: matters must be settled within three weeks, or he would fight³.

From Vienna, the British Ambassador did not vary his estimate of Leopold's good intentions and sincerity. But conflicts of royal with Ministerial policy, very typical of the State systems of the day, puzzled Keith. It is possible that Leopold utilised them to throw dust in his eyes. The old Chancellor Kaunitz, with his "haughty inflexibility," became so impracticable that another Minister, Count Philip Cobenzl, was authorised by Leopold to explain away the Chancellor's communications. Keith was asked to show them to Cobenzl, who would bring back his master's glosses. "It is at best (rejoined I) but an awkward method of doing business, and the sooner an end is put to it the better. But I subscribe to it for the present.... Here, My Lord," Keith concluded, "ends the history of Prince Kaunitz's political career: Heaven forbid that I should ever hereafter insult his ashes⁴." Kaunitz was not so easily buried; but, by June, the King of Hungary—Leopold was not yet Emperor—was in effective control of his own policy, and seemed ready to accept British mediation of a peace on the basis of the *status quo*⁵.

Pitt and his Cabinet, fully occupied at that time with the Spanish problem, could not bring their full weight to bear either on Leopold or on Prussia. Leeds had written, on May 21st, that Great Britain would acquiesce in minor territorial rearrangements, should an

¹ Copies were regularly sent by Ewart to Leeds.

² He writes from Breslau on June 16th. On June 21st, he moved to Reichenbach.

³ June 11th. Heigel, *op. cit.* p. 257. Hertzberg must have told Ewart, who wrote to Leeds on the 16th in these very words.

⁴ To Leeds, April 24th, 1790.

⁵ Keith's June despatches, *passim*. It may be worth noting that the Dutch Ambassador in Vienna reported at this time that there were three policies there—Kaunitz's, Cobenzl's, and Leopold's, "often totally distinct and separate from them both." Auckland [from the Hague] to Leeds, July 16th, 1790.

armistice and, eventually, peace be attainable on no other terms. A few weeks later, Leopold, in one of his friendly letters to Frederick William, had made it clear that he could not go beyond some such minor adjustments without sacrifice of honour¹. At the same time he sent Envoys, Baron Spielmann and Prince Reuss, to treat with Hertzberg, who was now established within twenty-five miles of the Bohemian frontier, at Reichenbach.

Here, the formal Conference opened on June 27th. On the first day, Prussians and Austrians discussed compensations, exchanges and the *status quo*. On the 29th, Ewart and his Dutch colleague van Rhee de were invited to attend. Ewart found that the negotiators were contemplating much more extensive "arrangements" than England could possibly approve. The Austrians were standing out for heavy compensation at the cost of the Porte—which looked ugly after their master's professions. Leopold, in fact, was far less radically friendly towards Great Britain and British schemes than he led her agents to suppose. He criticised her bitterly in letters to his sister, and he would almost certainly have risked the rejection of the *status quo*, for his armies were doing well on the Danube, had Catharine promised more powerful support². On both sides, Great Britain's influence was limited—far more limited than a first reading of Ewart's despatches suggests. Ewart threw every ounce of it into the scale; but the deciding weights were in other hands, as can be read between the lines of his despatches³.

For a month the discussions continued. Private agents came and went between Reichenbach and Vienna. All the personal forces at work in the Prussian Court made themselves felt. Varying news from the seat of war, and as to whether the Sultan would accept territorial sacrifices, supposing such were suggested by his new Ally Prussia—who left the Treaty of January still unratified—affected the course of the negotiations. The British and Dutch representatives laboured for peace. In the back-ground stood Russia, refusing to participate in a conference which implied mediation from outside, but influencing its course by a policy shifting and hard to interpret⁴. About July 21st, war seemed certain; and Frederick William sent Hertzberg "repeated orders to prepare the manifesto⁵." By this time, the Prussian King

¹ Copy in Ewart to Leeds, June 17th.

² Wolf, *Leopold und Marie Christine*, pp. 163 sqq. Salomon, p. 585.

³ A long series, July 1st, 8th, 16th, 18th, 22nd, 25th, 28th, August 4th. I over-rated the importance of Ewart's influence in my *Causes of the War of 1792*, pp. 61-2.

⁴ See Rose, I. 527.

⁵ Ewart to Leeds, July 25th.

had anchored his tossing mind to the alternative of the strict *status quo* or war. He hoped to pin Austria on one horn of this dilemma. Hertzberg's view was that Leopold could not accept the strict *status quo* without dishonour¹. Thus, he expected, and now desired, war. At Vienna, Kaunitz shared Hertzberg's view. But on July 23rd came news that Austria would not fight for her compensation; and on the 27th Declarations and Counter-declarations were exchanged.

Austria declared herself ready to conclude an armistice with the Porte, with a view to a *status quo* peace, though a hope was expressed that the Sultan might accept a few frontier adjustments. She would not participate in the Russo-Turkish War, should it continue. Prussia stipulated that, if the Sultan freely gave Austria anything, Austria must give Prussia something. Prussia and the Sea Powers were to guarantee Belgium to Austria, but also Belgium's ancient Constitutions. The Sea Powers promised to support the whole settlement—which was exactly what the British Cabinet had always desired—and to continue their mediation at the ensuing Peace Congress². At the last, both Hertzberg and Kaunitz had to be forced to sign, by personal notes from their respective masters³.

And now, wrote Frederick William to Hertzberg, we must work through Ewart to get English support in forcing the *status quo* on Russia. He had already used an opportunity of binding England to him by gratitude for services rendered. Two months earlier, Hertzberg had told Ewart that, if England's quarrel with Spain led to war, she might count on Prussia.

On January 7th, 1790, Consul-general Merry had written to the Duke of Leeds from Madrid: "Accounts have just been received here from Mexico that one of the small ships of war on the American establishment...has captured an English vessel in the port of Nootka (called by the Spaniards San Lorenzo) in Lat. 50 North of the coast of California. There are different relations of this event." A month later⁴, the Spanish Ambassador in London claimed for his country the sovereignty of those parts, *i.e.* the modern Vancouver Island and British Columbia. Leeds replied stiffly that, until the ship was restored and the violence atoned for, the question of principle must wait⁵, though, as his despatches show, the British Cabinet had no

¹ Salomon, p. 485.

² Ewart to Leeds, July 28th.

³ Heigel, I. 267.

⁴ February 11th, Rose, I. 565. As to the very complicated question of what actually happened in Nootka Sound, see Rose, *passim*.

⁵ February 16th. A rather bullying despatch, drafted by Pitt.

intention of conceding the principle. In Spain, Count Florida Blanca was distressed, so he said, at the British tone: in these times especially, such matters ought to be discussed without heat¹. In April, there were preparations both in English and Spanish dockyards; and at the end of the month the heat in this country was not lowered by the reception of a memorial from the aggrieved party, Meares, an ex-lieutenant of the Navy, who had bought land from the Indians at Nootka and was carrying on the fur-trade there. He made strong charges of cruelty and bad faith against the Spaniards.

War was already in sight. "I can see only one circumstance," Merry wrote on April 12th², "which may incline the King of Spain and his Ministry to war—it is the idea that it might be the means to re-establish the royal authority in France, as that Kingdom would naturally take a part." The whole tone of Florida Blanca's communications with Eden in 1789 justifies the assumption that the motive indicated may have been at work³. But, when Merry wrote, he did not think it would prevail to overcome the Spanish Minister's desire for peace. However, after Great Britain had officially intimated that she was arming, and had sent out the pressgangs, opinion at the Spanish Court became more warlike. This was in the first week of May⁴. Merry's explanation was "that the national vanity of Spain had so much increased of late, as well by the situation of France, as by the manner in which she has been flattered by the Imperial Courts"—in connexion, that is, with the schemes for a Quadruple Alliance⁵. It is true that Florida Blanca had been losing his hold on affairs, since the death of Charles III in 1788; persons vain in every sense of the word were acquiring influence at Court. Indeed, the British agent had suggested that the Count might conceivably be contemplating war, in order to secure his position against them⁶.

Meanwhile, Pitt, who had not forgotten how the Family Compact had helped Washington, took a hand in the game of revolution-making in a rival's discontented provinces, as played by Hertzberg,

¹ Merry to Leeds, March 22nd.

² To Leeds.

³ See, especially, Eden to Leeds July 27th; August 10th. It may be noted that Eden had "never...seen reason to doubt either the veracity or the candour of Count Florida Blanca." To Leeds, February 23rd, 1789.

⁴ Leeds to Merry, May 3rd, notifying armament, and the May despatches from Madrid. The pressgangs were out on the 5th. A French agent in England wrote: "*Si l'on juge des projets du gouvernement anglais par les préparatifs, on doit croire à une guerre la plus longue et la plus sévère possible.*" Sorel, II. 85.

⁵ To Leeds, May 20th.

⁶ In his letter of April 12th.

by entering into personal relation with Miranda, Brissot's friend, the exiled advocate of South-American independence¹. Pitt, with the full support of his King, was now challenging Spain on the question of principle²—the claim to sovereignty over the Pacific coast up to 60° N. Not wishing to exclude a peaceful solution, he sent Alleyne Fitzherbert on a special mission to Madrid, at the end of May. But it would appear that in no case did he mean to withdraw. His ready, almost brutal, acceptance of this challenge to a struggle in which maritime prestige and the freedom of colonisation were at stake is in notable contrast with his laboured approach to any Continental problem. The reaction is instinctive: there are to be no abstract rights over blocks of parallels of latitude: the beard of the King of Spain is to be singed.

Fitzherbert went by Paris, to test the strength of the Family Compact; for no one supposed that Spain would fight, if the Compact now proved too weak to hold France to her. He was "inclined to believe that M. de Montmorin is perfectly sincere in the desire that he professes to see our difference with Spain terminated amicably," but could "plainly perceive that many of the other members of the aristocratical faction are anxious to bring on a war." "However, their opponents begin to be aware of their drift and...have chosen the present time for carrying into execution their plan of transferring the power of making war and peace from the Crown to the National Assembly³." It was the King's intimation, given on May 14th, that he proposed to arm forty ships of the line as a precautionary measure, which had roused the Assembly. Montmorin hoped that the threat from the old enemy, risen from her humiliation of seven years ago, might rally the representatives of the people to the Throne. On the contrary, it crippled French diplomatic and military action by rendering the seat of authority uncertain. Robespierre was up on the 15th of May, proposing that France should renounce all wars of conquest; Pétion followed on the 17th, Volney on the 18th, Barnave on the 21st. Mirabeau stood for the King and was called a traitor. By the 22nd it had been decided that the King might propose war to the Assembly, but might not declare it without their concurrence. "England has nothing more to fear from France and can lay hands on the hegemony of the two worlds, without scruple and without

¹ Details in Rose, I. 569.

² Despatch of May 4th.

³ Fitzherbert to Leeds, May 20th.

fear," bitterly wrote a French agent from London¹. Fitzherbert went on to Madrid with some confidence.

He found the Spaniards unexpectedly, and as he thought stupidly, warlike—from a feeling of jealousy, he supposed. They seemed, he said, not to count much on France, but had hopes of the United States². However, before the end of July he had signed an agreement with Florida Blanca as to the actual episode of Nootka Sound. Spain promised satisfaction³. "Their present object," he now reported, "is to preserve peace on almost any terms."

No doubt, one reason was that they had asked France for armed assistance in the middle of June and had hitherto received no reply. Montmorin only laid the matter before the Assembly on August 2nd. *It was referred to the Diplomatic Committee, presided over by Mirabeau*. Not knowing what the outcome might be, Pitt kept his fleets ready. On August 25th, at Mirabeau's suggestion, the Assembly decided to arm forty-five capital ships and begin a negotiation with Spain for the transformation of the Family Compact into a National Compact. A little earlier, Florida Blanca had told Fitzherbert that his appeal to France had been merely *pro forma* and occasioned by England's similar, and earlier, appeal to her Ally the United Provinces. He did not expect help from the National Assembly, "nor in truth did he desire to receive any, at the immediate risk of introducing by that means into this kingdom those democratic principles now so universally prevalent...in France⁴." He would, however, welcome support from Russia and Austria, but—this of course he did not say—he had received no encouragement from either. When the proposal for a new sort of Compact was ready, in September, he explained that his King loathed it, but would have to accept, "if the Court of London pressed too hardly upon him in the present juncture⁵." But, since the proposal was accompanied by the suggestion that Spain should restore Louisiana to France, and since Spain neither wished to do this, nor desired an alliance with the democrats, nor yet believed in the fighting value of such an alliance, Florida Blanca yielded to relentless pressure from London⁶, and signed, on October 28th. The claim to

¹ Sorel, II. 91.

² To Leeds, June 16th.

³ Fitzherbert to Leeds, July 25th.

⁴ Fitzherbert to Leeds, August 19th.

⁵ Fitzherbert to Leeds, September 16th.

⁶ On October 2nd Leeds is writing of "one further effort" and "our final and unalterable decisions," which if not accepted negotiations are to be broken off. To Fitzherbert.

Pacific dominion north of the actual Spanish settlements was withdrawn: the Pacific, though not these settlements, was declared open to British commerce and fishery: and full restitution and compensation were guaranteed to the parties aggrieved at Nootka Sound¹.

In Continental history, the most famous aspect of the Nootka Sound affair is its relation to the career of Mirabeau. What was his policy? Why did he suggest armament yet go no further? What were his exact relations with Pitt's two semi-official agents, his own friend Hugh Elliot and W. A. Miles? Did either of them use the legendary "gold of Pitt"? The probability is that they did². But these are, in truth, all secondary problems in the history of British Foreign Policy. Nothing suggests that, had France vigorously supported Spain, Pitt's policy would have been altered. From the French side, it is most doubtful whether such vigorous support could have been given, whatever course Mirabeau had followed. And Spain never really wanted alliance on the only terms considered in France. "His Catholic Majesty could not reconcile it to His Feelings to contribute, at a critical moment like the present, to the extinguishing the reviving hopes of the partisans of the French monarchy by...a renunciation on his part of the Family Compact³."

But the correspondence relating to the negotiations with Mirabeau raises a wider issue. When consenting to Elliot's mission, King George stipulated that there should be no interference whatever in French internal affairs, no taking sides among the French parties. "We have honourably not meddled with the internal dissensions of France," he wrote, "and no object ought to drive us from that honourable ground⁴." Pitt's relations with Miranda show that such interference was not beneath the dignity of the British Cabinet; but the King's statement was nevertheless true. The British inaction had surprised Continental observers. Even in 1789, the diplomatic gossips in Berlin could not understand Pitt's conduct; they thought he could not be such a fool as not to declare war⁵. And a German scholar wrote: "What do you think of the French Revolution? That England has

¹ For the final stages see Fitzherbert's despatches of October 14th, 18th, 24th, 28th. On October 14th, on receipt of Leed's of October 2nd, he feared rupture.

² Rose, *Pitt*, I. 577 *sqq.*—a discussion which goes nearer to providing satisfactory answers to these questions than any other.

³ Fitzherbert to Leeds, November 28th, 1790.

⁴ To Pitt, October 26th, 1790. P. V. Smith MSS. p. 368 in H.M.C. Duke of Beaufort MSS. and others. The collection was made by Pitt's secretary, Joseph Smith.

⁵ Report of the Comte d'Esterno from Berlin, September 9th, 1789. Sorel, II. 297.

allowed it is a tribute to her heart, but not to her head¹." No doubt, the heart had its influence. An English statesman could scarcely have interfered, had he wished it, in the early days of sympathy for a people struggling for freedom. And the King's honourable horror of such interference as that from which he had himself suffered during the American War was always a restraining force. But a main reason for abstention was a calculation of the head, which proved to be wrong—that France was no longer dangerous. That "the rival of Great Britain was, at least for the present annihilated," was still an axiom in the Foreign Office at the end of 1790². Great Britain did not at once realise, as the German scholar did, that "the republic of twenty-four millions would give her more trouble than the autocracy." In 1789-90, she did not foresee a republic.

In one of his despatches to Fitzherbert, Leeds had explained that Great Britain could not reduce her naval establishment until France did the same. He had added that it would not be wise to do so, with the Russian matter still pending³. At that time, the representatives of Great Britain, Austria, Prussia, Holland and Turkey were preparing to move to the dirty little oriental town of Sistova on the Danube⁴, to arrange an eastern peace on the basis of the *status quo*. Sir Robert Keith arrived there on December 20th⁵. No Russian came. On December 22nd, Suvoroff, Bessarabia now behind him, stormed Ismail, far down the river, and was in a position to organise an invasion of the Sultan's home provinces, by way of the Dobrudja. Earlier in the month (December 2nd), Leopold's armies, set in motion against his rebellious subjects in Belgium, had entered Brussels without difficulty. The Belgians had been ruined by their divisions. All through 1790, the democratic party, headed by Vonck, had been working against the Catholic and Constitutional party of van der Noot. These "Red Patriots," as an English agent called them⁶, had been encouraged by the visits of two French agents, first La Fayette's confidant Sémonville, then Dumouriez, who had reported very unfavourably on the military prospects of any Belgian Government⁷. By

¹ Georg Forster. Cf. Gooch, *Germany and the French Revolution*, p. 304.

² From a long unsigned and undated memoir *On a Defensive Alliance with Spain*, a subject under discussion after the Nootka settlement.

³ Leeds to Fitzherbert, October 2nd, 1790.

⁴ Now in Bulgaria.

⁵ *Memoirs of Sir R. M. Keith*, II. 324.

⁶ Colonel Gardiner to Leeds, February 2nd, 1790.

⁷ Gardiner's reports of July 12th and 26th and August 2nd contain a full account of this mission and an excellent appreciation of Dumouriez.

the beginning of 1791, not only had Belgian opposition to Leopold collapsed; his tact and discretion had calmed the rest of his dominions.

It is not therefore surprising, nor really very discreditable, that the Austrian representatives at Sistova should have wasted time and attempted to escape from their promise about the *status quo*¹. The promise had been extracted by pressure. Suvoroff was now exerting great, if indirect, counter-pressure. That the Triple Alliance would be able to force Catharine to renounce her conquests seemed unlikely. If Turkey collapsed, were the Habsburgs, who had suffered much in contributing to that collapse, to go away empty handed?

Catharine's position had been strengthened during 1790 by the action of Gustavus III of Sweden. Saved from what looked like a risk of destruction in 1788, he had managed to carry through a *coup d'état* against the aristocratic party, in 1789. But his political successes at home had not improved his financial position. He always tried to drive hard bargains with the Triple Alliance; and, at any time, the prospects of active Swedish campaigning depended on the success of such bargains². In 1790, he could only secure a small part of his demands—from Great Britain and Prussia, the Dutch being unwilling to assist. Catharine made him attractive offers after Reichenbach. Moreover, ever since October, 1789, he had been passionately interested in the fate of his ancient Ally the King of France, and he wished to be free to champion the cause of monarchy. His solicitude for that cause, if romantic and impracticable, was disinterested. Suddenly, in July, 1790, although a British fleet was ready to sail to the Baltic, and although he had promised not to conclude a separate peace with Russia, he sent Baron Armfelt to conclude such a peace. The way was made easy for Armfelt, and Peace was signed on August 14th, 1790³.

This defection had increased the desire, which had long existed in London, to widen the Triple Alliance. Gustavus himself had been an ally designate. Among other possible allies were Denmark—but she was unlikely—and the reformed Republic of Poland, which would have been glad of this admission to the circle of Great Powers. As the chief British promoters of this extended system of alliances were

¹ See Keith's *Memoirs*, II. 369 *sqq.* Letters of February to June, 1791.

² "The Swede is not much to be depended on even when highly paid." Auckland to Grenville, April 20th, 1791. *Dropmore Papers*, II. 49.

³ See Geffroy, *Gustave III et la cour de France*, II. 102 *sqq.* and Rose, *Pitt*, I. 530-2. In January, 1791, Gustavus wrote to Catharine to suggest a joint refusal to recognise the tricolour flag. Geffroy, II. 111.

Ewart at Berlin and Hailes at Warsaw, the chances of Poland's admission to what these Ambassadors, in their despatches, referred to as "the great federal chain"¹ at one time seemed good. The final detachment of Poland from her Russian connexion was specially attractive at a time when Catharine appeared the chief obstacle to "the restoration of general tranquillity." But Prussia looked on Poland as her own preserve and suspected any proposal for a commercial treaty, the form into which the projected Anglo-Polish *rapprochement* was first thrown. "It is contrary to my interests and insidious and must be set aside," King Frederick William wrote in October². He was conscious that any strengthening of Poland would make her less likely to cede the necessary minimum after all these years of effort, that is, Thorn and Danzig. At the end of the year the Poles had a representative in London, Count Oginski, who had a series of interviews with Pitt³. Poland was, also, in treaty with the Porte for a commercial outlet down the Dniester, to evade a Prussian throttling of the Vistula trade. She was most reluctant to cede anything, and was furious with Prussia who had not won for her any part of Galicia, yet still talked of compensation. Pitt gave Oginski good economic advice, and suggested the cession of Danzig alone, in return for a commercial treaty with Prussia providing for outlets in that direction. The suggestion was acceptable neither to Poland nor to Prussia. Thus, when, in January, 1791, actual proposals for the admission of Poland to the Triple Alliance were sent to Berlin and Warsaw, the business languished until the break up of the Alliance in April; and it was never revived⁴. At this very time, Hertzberg was preparing the way for the Second Partition by secret personal dealings with Russia⁵.

Catharine was known to demand Oczakoff and its district. It was supposed, but not certainly known, that this was meant to cover all the land to the Dniester, including Odessa—at that time a village never mentioned in the despatches. Frederick William was committed to the support of Turkey, and was at this time resolute for the *status quo*. If he could force it on Russia, Austria could not evade it, and, at least, no rival would gain territory and "souls"—the currency of Princely bargains—when he as yet had acquired none. But he did not want war. In England, his most valuable advocates were Whitworth,

¹ Hailes to Leeds, June 18th, 1790. He has heard with delight from Ewart of the prospect of Poland, Sweden and the Porte entering our "great federal chain."

² October 21st. Salomon, p. 500.

³ See Rose, I. 594 sqq. and Salomon, pp. 506-7.

⁴ Rose, I. 595, 599.

⁵ See Rose, I. 597.

whose despatches from Petrograd led Pitt to suppose that Russia must yield to a threat of force¹, and Joseph Ewart, on leave from Berlin in the winter of 1790-1. Ewart had laid before Pitt a series of *Considerations on the expediency of combining Poland, Turkey and one of the inferior Baltic Powers in the defensive System of the Allies*². He insisted on the enormous importance of Oczakoff and the risk to British prestige which its acquisition by Catharine would involve. There was also the certainty of losing our chief Ally, who had stood by us in the Nootka business, and, with him, all control over Leopold and the course of events. Ewart's argument was traversed by Auckland, now Ambassador at the Hague. Writing to Pitt personally he urged "the importance of peace to your whole system of government," suggested that "we overrated the object in question," as Oczakoff was not really vital, and explained that he had good reason to believe that the King of Prussia had no wish for a Russian war³. The Pensionary van de Spiegel supported Auckland.

Ewart won. By the beginning of February Great Britain was committed in principle to the enforcement of the *status quo* on Russia by a threat of force, though a final decision was postponed. Reluctance to risk the break up of an Alliance which had done much for the peace of Europe and our own prestige; a measure of gratitude to the King of Prussia; fear lest the Austro-Turkish Peace, for whose character Great Britain stood pledged, should miscarry; forebodings of an ultimate clash of interest between Russia and ourselves in the Near East; and perhaps some desire to school a particularly arrogant woman—all contributed to the decision. Ewart was arguing his case, but also stating the main issue as he induced Ministers to see it, when he wrote to Auckland on January 5th: "I am sure your Lordship will agree with me...that Oczakoff and its district are very secondary considerations in comparison of the great influence which the decision of the present question must have on the strength and permanency of the system of the Allies on which the preservation of peace likewise depends⁴."

Auckland did his duty at the Hague with reluctance. "If that Russian business could happily be settled we might sit still and look

¹ Rose, I. 598.

² Pitt MSS. Salomon, p. 502. There are also two able Memoirs by Ewart on Anglo-Russian relations, dated April, 1791, in the *Dropmore Papers*, II. 44 sqq.

³ To Pitt, January 29th, 1791. *Dropmore Papers*, II. 22.

⁴ Auckland MSS., B.M. Add. 34435. J. B. Burges, the Under-secretary for Foreign Affairs, wrote more and more in this same strain to Auckland—e.g. March 1st, 1791, showing that Ewart's doctrine had become official orthodoxy.

at the French story like spectators in a theatre," he wrote to his brother in January. And, in March, he wrote to Grenville: "This phantom of Oczakoff has appeared to me for some time to beckon us towards an abyss of new debts and endless difficulties at a moment ...when it may be essential perhaps to the very existence of our government and of many other civilised states, that we should maintain our own internal peace...¹" Auckland had now comprehended the possible dangers from "a republic of twenty-four millions," which Georg Forster foresaw in 1789.

Pitt took no risks and worked at all the Courts, beginning with his Allies, before reaching his final decision. Plans were communicated to the Hague and Berlin. At the Hague, information was sought from the Dutch Admiral Kingsbergen, who had recently visited Oczakoff. Frederick William was told that London saw no possible counter-alliance which might prevent the humbling of Russia in the spring². At Madrid, Fitzherbert was to solicit Spanish help or, failing that, a promise of neutrality. He secured the latter—a promise of "the strictest neutrality³." Copenhagen made the same promise. At Stockholm, Liston failed to catch "the Swede" with offers of money. Lord Elgin, who had been sent on a special mission to Leopold II in November, 1790, to congratulate him on his accession and facilitate a Belgian settlement by direct negotiation, was, if he could, to secure Austrian cooperation in a general settlement, and to speed up the Congress of Sistova; or at least, to keep Leopold from helping the Tsarina⁴. Paris was not neglected. Hugh Elliot and Miles were to let it be known privately that Pitt was not making preparations against France⁵.

By the end of February, Frederick William had learnt, as he supposed, that Austria might be kept quiet—possibly by concessions at Sistova—in the event of a Prusso-Russian war. He had learnt it, in a way characteristic of his methods, by the despatch to Vienna of his personal favourite and confidant Colonel Bischoffswerder. Pitt, meanwhile, was testing the information about Oczakoff supplied from Holland, which, coming through Auckland, insisted on the un-

¹ To Morton Eden, January 11th; to Grenville, March 5th. B.M. Add. 34435-6.

² Leeds to Jackson (Ewart's deputy), January 8th.

³ Leeds to Fitzherbert, January 3rd; Fitzherbert to Leeds January 29th.

⁴ Elgin's special mission, *F.O. Austria*, vol. 23. Despatches of January to February.

⁵ *Miles Correspondence*, I. 43, 280. All these various negotiations are referred to by Salomon, pp. 504-6.

important aspects of the place¹. Leeds was talking of how to avoid war without sacrificing honour. He feared we were too far committed². In Berlin, at the same time, Hertzberg was thinking of the same things, though from another angle. Hertzberg, however, was not Prussia. The King did not desire war, but wrote, on March 11th, a personal letter to his Ambassador in London explaining the reputedly favourable attitude of Leopold, and suggesting the coercion of Russia by a "display of force³." This letter decided the British Cabinet. On March 27th, the ultimatum went to Russia, and plans for naval and military preparations to Berlin⁴. Catharine was to resign all the conquests of this war, but might retain the Crimea, absorbed in 1783. It was to recover the Crimea that Turkey had declared war in 1788.

There remained Parliament, which was apprised next day of the need for naval preparations. The Lords were critical, but yielded a substantial majority. In the Commons, Pitt seems to have opened badly; the Whigs had excellent opportunities; but the majority was again considerable. Yet there was no enthusiasm for the policy of Ministers, which is in no way surprising, in view of the remoteness of the object and the hesitation they had themselves shown in adopting it. Further, on the day they despatched their ultimatum, news came, first, from Auckland—who controlled a better *cabinet noir* than any other British diplomatist—that "he had happened to see" a ciphered Prussian despatch which showed clearly that, in spite of the King's letter, the Emperor was not to be trusted, and, secondly, from Drake at Copenhagen, that Catharine was likely to prove reasonable in negotiation⁵. The Cabinet met often and discussed long, early in April. Some change of front was suggested, but opposed by Leeds, who did not see how it could be managed with honour⁶. By April 10th Pitt was confessing to Ewart, that he had failed to make the House understand the matter and could never carry the vote of credit, and was "repeating, even with tears in his eyes, that it was the greatest mortification he had ever experienced⁷." Within a few days, Leeds had refused to sign despatches suggesting a modification of the ultimatum, and had made way for William Grenville. Before the

¹ Rose, I. 604.

² To Auckland, March 11th. Quoted in Rose, I. 605, from B.M. Add. 34436.

³ Rose, I. 607-8, where the King's letter is quoted from the F. O. records. Salomon (p. 514) failed to find the original at Berlin.

⁴ Leeds to Jackson and Leeds to Whitworth, March 27th.

⁵ Rose, I. 614-5.

⁶ See Browning, *Political Memoranda of Francis, Fifth Duke of Leeds*, 150-73.

⁷ Major-General Sir Spencer Ewart's MSS., first used by Rose, I. 617.

end of the month, Ewart, returning to Berlin from a sense of loyalty towards Pitt, in order to undo his own policy, had seen the King, who said repeatedly that, "as he was convinced the intentions were good, however mortified he might be at the change, he would concur in doing everything in his power to prevent bad consequences¹." In July, Auckland was explaining to his brother how much he preferred Grenville to Leeds, and how "from the hour of his taking the seals we have laboured hard to get not quite disgracefully out of a very bad scrape, and I begin to hope that it will end tolerably well²." This was after the flight to Varennes—the hinge on which European history in 1791 swings. "All political speculation will now turn to France," Auckland wrote in August. Russian affairs, he said, were not working out so ill after all³. Catharine would obtain her Dniester boundary, but no more. His desire to see these affairs out of the way, that the English might "look at the French story like spectators in a theatre," seemed near fulfilment.

Spectators they became for a year and more. From every Court, when once the débris of Russian policy and the Sistova Congress have been cleared up, the reports of the British Ambassadors are those of a profoundly interested audience at the great Continental play. The Triple Alliance faded into nominal life, a "conviction of good intentions" being a poor foundation even for a political friendship. "I know now," Ewart wrote in August, "that though the King and Colonel Bischoffswerder professed to be satisfied with the explanation I gave them, they immediately lost confidence in the resources both of the Alliance and of this country⁴." So, Great Britain lost her diplomatic *point d'appui*. The Congress of Sistova was speeded up, not so much because Elgin demanded it, as because Leopold became absorbed in French affairs, anxious to put others aside, and thus accessible to Colonel Bischoffswerder, the leading Prussian advocate of interference in France. In May and June, Elgin was following Leopold up and down Italy, trying to detach him from Russia, according to instructions. While Elgin was talking in terms of the previous year's diplomacy, Leopold—aware of his sister's projected flight—was debating whether the friendship which Great Britain offered might not be used to establish a European Concert for the settlement of France. Elgin came to think that Leopold was mainly

¹ Ewart to Grenville, April 30th.

² July 10th. B.M. Add. 34438.

³ To Morton Eden, August 12th. B.M. Add. 34439.

⁴ To Grenville, August 21st.

concerned to check the "progress of democratical principles." "Nay, his Imperial Majesty went so far as to suggest the expediency of guaranteeing not only the possessions, but also the Constitutions of the different States of Europe¹."

A month later, Bischoffswerder came to Italy from Berlin to offer an alliance, and was well received. Before the news of Varennes arrived, Leopold had promised to finish at Sistova and had issued the necessary orders. He had agreed to a defensive alliance with Prussia, and to a personal interview with Frederick William. Elgin, though kept on the fringe of affairs, knew the outline of all this². After the Varennes catastrophe, Leopold issued his Padua Circular to the Powers, with its suggestion of joint action to "vindicate the liberty and honour of the Most Christian King and his family, and to limit the dangerous extremes of the French Revolution."

Great Britain did not commit herself over this Circular, until she was sure that Leopold meant to finish at Sistova. Such was now his intention. By August 13th the Sistova Treaty was ratified at Vienna. After the lapse of a year, the Reichenbach agreement had been strictly carried out and British policy endorsed. Attached to the main Treaty was a separate Convention specifying "the small and voluntary concessions which the Turks were disposed to grant³"; but this had been allowed for at Reichenbach. Three days earlier, Catharine's negotiators had agreed to preliminaries of peace with Turkey. No mediating Powers were there: Catharine had never intended otherwise. She secured her Dniester boundary. In consequence of Great Britain's *volte-face* in the matter of Oczakoff, the event forms no part of the history of British Foreign Policy, though, perhaps, but for that policy and its reactions on Austria, Catharine might not have renounced Bessarabia.

After that, Great Britain hardly made a pretence of remaining in the Triple Alliance or of continuing to figure on the Continental stage. Witness Grenville's private letter to Auckland of August 23rd: "The conclusion of the Sistova business has removed every difficulty which there was in the way of our speaking out, and avowing our determination of the most scrupulous neutrality in the French business—and I now hold this language to all the foreign ministers, in order that it may be clearly understood that we are no parties to any step the

¹ To Grenville, May 9th, 1791.

² His despatches June 13th, 14th, 18th contain fairly full accounts, derived apparently from Bischoffswerder.

³ Keith to Grenville, August 2nd, 1791.

King of Prussia may take on this subject¹." Or see Grenville's Instructions to Keith a month later, after Leopold and Frederick William had issued the Declaration of Pillnitz (August 27th), and the Emigrant Princes their insolent address to King Lewis, in which they told him he had no right to sign the new Constitution: "With respect to the concert which has been proposed to His Majesty and to other Powers by the Emperor, or to the measures of active intervention which appear to have been in contemplation for the restoration of the French monarchy...the King has determined not to take any part either in supporting or in opposing them. This resolution he has already explained to his allies and also to other powers, and...he commanded me to instruct you to use a similar language at Vienna²."

Six months later, March 20th, 1792, Auckland, now in retirement at Beckenham, yet "every day seeing well-informed men of all descriptions," wrote to a friend that he had heard recently from Mr Burges, the Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office; but that "the remarks which he makes are general and chiefly calculated...to explain that England has little concern now in what is going forward on the Continent"—the Revolutionary Wars began a month later—"except perhaps with regard to Poland, to which the Empress seems to turn her attention in a manner that may eventually interest other powers though it will not implicate us." Catharine was moving up her armies to destroy the reformed Polish Constitution, completed in May, 1791, after the Triple Alliance and with it Great Britain's Polish policy had cracked. She was also inciting Prussia and Austria to attack France, in order to obtain "elbow room" in Poland³. "His remark," Auckland continued, "that we have no concern in foreign politics is true in another sense to a degree that I cannot describe to you...and this indifference as to foreign affairs is general thro' the kingdom; you may trace it even in your newspapers; perhaps it may justly be attributed to the great prosperity of the country, which confines all attention to interior and insular details. I have lately much wished to pass a day or two at the Hague for the sake of a little rational conversation⁴." Auckland instanced, as the kind of topic in which no interest whatever was taken by representative Englishmen, the death of the Emperor Leopold (March 1st, 1792). It was a well-

¹ B.M. Add. 34439.

² Grenville to Keith, September 19th, 1791.

³ Sorel, II. 216-7. See also Kaunitz' analysis of her motives in Vivenot, *Quellen zur Geschichte der...Kaiserpolitik Oesterreichs*, I. 358.

⁴ B.M. Add. 34441.

chosen illustration; for, although it is most unlikely that Leopold would have averted the clash between Old Europe and revolutionary France in 1792—both he and the French were too deeply committed to war before he died—yet it is certain that the loss of his skilful and mediating personality and the substitution for it of a young and ignorant Prince, dominated by a mixed group of advisers, were a disaster for Europe.

Auckland wrote as a diplomatist, with a high standard of interest in foreign affairs. There was in England no lack of vague interest; Burke's *Reflections* sold well; but, from Pitt downwards, the country was in a mood to wash its hands of Continental matters. Even Pitt's interest in them had been intermittent. Now, the old enemy was believed to be crippled. She must be watched, but need not be countered. Hardly anyone had begun to think regularly of Russian power as a danger to English interests. In 1790, some attention had been given to a pamphlet which made much of the Russian threat to the Balance of Power in Europe; but Oczakoff revealed the fundamental indifference. Only a handful of experts had ever understood the working of the Triple Alliance. It was an affair of Cabinets and Courts and favourites, of intercepted despatches and Congresses in inaccessible places. No single event in its history, since the initial strokes in the Low Countries, was of the least interest to the average educated Englishman. With Nootka Sound it had been different. The place was more remote than Sistova or Oczakoff; but, even down to the No-Popery mobs of London, Englishmen could understand a maritime quarrel with Spain.

"The English," we find Albert Sorel writing, towards the end of the nineteenth century, "only make up their minds to fight when their interests seem absolutely threatened. But then, plunging into the struggle because they feel themselves bound to do so, they apply to it a serious and concentrated passion, an animosity the more tenacious because its motive is so self-regarding. Their history is full of alternations between an indifference which makes people think them decadent, and a rage which baffles their foes. They are seen, in turn, abandoning and dominating Europe, neglecting the greatest Continental matters and claiming to control even the smallest, turning from peace at any price to war to the death¹." During the early years of Pitt's Ministry, they had been in one of these phases of apparent indifference. From 1787 to 1791, they seemed to be preparing for

¹ *L'Europe et la Révolution Française*, I. 240. (First published in 1885.)

the alternative phase. Had Oczakoff led to a general war—but for the change of front, a very probable contingency—then the phase of rage might have set in; for a general war would soon have threatened England's nearer interests. As it was, the phase of indifference never seemed more complete than in the eighteen months which preceded the longest of her modern Wars.

After the rebuff to the Padua Circular, the Powers of Europe made no attempt to influence her. The Emigrant Princes tried, now and again; but their cause was so hopeless, in view of England's deliberately adopted attitude, that the details have no place in the history of her foreign policy. "Repeated applications have been made to His Majesty," Grenville wrote at the end of August, 1791, "on the part of the Emperor, of the King of Sweden, and of the French Princes, to concert in the plans which are in agitation for restoring the French monarchy. But His Majesty has determined not to depart from... strict neutrality¹." From that policy there was not the slightest deviation during the following year. It was the same when England was approached from another section of French opinion—the Constitutional revolutionary party. The approaches were made, first, informally before the outbreak of war in Europe in 1792, and then, formally, after the outbreak. On both occasions Talleyrand was the agent. The object was to ensure English neutrality and feel towards an Anglo-French entente².

Talleyrand came first, in the middle of January, 1792. The visit and its results were summarised, from the English side, by Grenville, writing to Lord Gower at Paris, early in March³. "Since I wrote to Your Excellency on the subject of M. de Talleyrand I have seen that gentleman twice. The first time he explained to me very much at large the disposition of the French Government...to enter into the strictest connection with Great Britain, and proposed that this should be done by a Treaty of mutual guaranty, or in such other manner as the Government of this country should prefer." Grenville told him that he did not expect to be able to enter into any kind of negotiation with an agent not officially accredited. At the second interview, he confirmed this, but had no difficulty in saying to Talleyrand, as an individual, "that it was very far from being the disposition of this Government to

¹ To Lord St Helens (Fitzherbert), August 26th, 1791. See W. Grenville to George Aust (of the Foreign Office), September 20th, 1791, with Instructions for a reply to the Emigrants. The critical passage is quoted in Lecky, v. 558.

² See Pallain, *La Mission de Talleyrand à Londres en 1792*.

³ Grenville to Gower, March 9th.

endeavour to foment or prolong the disturbances there, with a view to any profit to be derived from them to this country." This last declaration was perfectly sincere. The day after Grenville wrote, Talleyrand returned to Paris.

He came back at the end of April, nominally second in command to Chauvelin, War against the Emperor having just been declared. The scheme which he was to advocate ran thus. For the moment, England's benevolent neutrality was to save France from complications with the United Provinces or Spain. She was to be made to understand that the coming French attack on Belgium was a military necessity, not a prelude to annexation. And then—then, when this war was over, the Constitutional monarchies of the west, the old and the new, were to rule Europe and the seas. There was to be a new commercial treaty. The Spanish Colonies in South America were to be liberated and thrown open to trade. Hand in hand, France and England were to share in that trade and in the maintenance of Constitutional liberties throughout the world¹.

Nothing was accomplished. The English Court was frigid, the people almost offensive—so reported Dumont, who was a member of the Embassy. Only the Whig houses were thrown open. Talleyrand said that the English Ministry was "the most secret in all Europe." It kept them waiting for a month; then moved King George to write a short, friendly, empty note to Lewis XVI (May 18th), and to issue a public Declaration of Neutrality (May 25th). England regretted the War; she intended to respect all Treaties; she wished to live at peace with France, and trusted that France would contribute to peace by showing respect for the rights of His Majesty and His Allies. There were no real negotiations, and Talleyrand spent his generous leisure in composing his *Lettres sur les Anglais*. He left this country early in July; the indiscreet Chauvelin remaining².

The rising tone of the French propaganda, and the attack on Belgium, explain the suspicious reticence of the British Ministry. It is indeed, at first sight, surprising that Pitt did not take an even stronger line as to Belgium. But, at this time, he was not faced, as he supposed, with that risk of absorption of the Belgian Provinces into France which he had so clearly stated, in 1789, to be at all times a *casus belli* for Great Britain. The first French attack northwards, at the

¹ *Réflexions pour la Négociation d'Angleterre en cas de Guerre*, March 30th. Pallain, pp. 172 sqq.

² Sorel, II. 440 sqq.

end of April, proved a pitiable failure. All through May and June, the accounts of the mismanagement and insubordination of the French armies in Flanders were arriving at the Foreign Office, from a more capable British representative on the spot¹. By the beginning of July, it was reported that the French had "entirely evacuated" the frontier districts into which they had penetrated. A month later, the news came that the garrison towns and camps on the French side of the frontier were in good order, the fortifications "in the most perfect repair, and even considerably added to, since the probability of war with the Emperor." But there was no discipline. The Emigration had ruined the corps of officers; "nor is there a remedy against this evil." So, although Dumouriez was said to be confident and "the soldiery (by which is meant only the private men) and the peasantry universally revolutionists," it seemed impossible that France should "frustrate, or even derange, the plans of the combined army" of Prussia and Austria². Pitt might well conclude that the Belgian Provinces were in no danger.

Throughout the summer, the best-informed men in England discussed Continental affairs on the assumption that the military plans of the Allies would not be "even deranged." "As soon as the German troops arrive in Paris," Grenville wrote to Auckland on June 19th, "whatever is the ruling party in Paris must apply to us to mediate for them. Such at least is my speculation. Even in that case, it would, I think, be right to hold back, and to show no anxiety for that sort of interference....But if the opportunity presents itself I know no end of this troubled scene so advantageous as the bringing about by our assistance, an agreement which, I am convinced, all the parties will equally wish³."

On the day on which Colonel Gardiner sent his sanguine military report to Grenville, the French monarchy fell. Great Britain recalled her Ambassador, accredited to a King, not to a revolutionary Assembly; but her calculations as to the near future remained unchanged. A circular was sent round the Courts of Europe, explaining that the withdrawal of the Minister made no difference to her neutrality. Grenville had still no reason to doubt the early arrival of the Germans in Paris. Presumably, he continued his speculations as to the most advantageous thing that could happen next. On September 3rd—the

¹ Colonel Gardiner to Grenville, May and June despatches, *passim* (F.O. Flanders).

² Gardiner to Grenville, August 10th, 1792.

³ *Dropmore Papers*, II. 281.

day after that on which the massacres had begun—he heard from his Foreign Office subordinate the latest news from France. It announced that the successful march on Paris was sure¹. From every source came the same confident news.

Before the month of October was out, Valmy had been fought and lost; Ferdinand of Brunswick had recrossed the French frontier; and Custine with his army of the Vosges had dashed into Germany, to occupy Mainz and Frankfort. On November 6th, Dumouriez, taking up in person the Belgian plan of campaign, broke the Austrians at Jemappes by Mons; and two days later the Austrian Government fled from Brussels. The postulates of British Foreign Policy had become uncertain.

¹ J. B. Burges to Grenville, September 3rd. *Dropmore Papers*, II, 308.

CHAPTER II

THE STRUGGLE WITH REVOLUTIONARY FRANCE

I

THE overthrow of the French monarchy on August 10th, 1792, established the supremacy of men who owed their power chiefly to the populace of Paris; and the ensuing September massacres, carried out by the Revolutionary Commune of that city, helped still further to cow the moderates, disgust the provincials, and establish the domination of the capital. Thenceforth, it was the misfortune of the French democratic movement, which had claimed to be universal, that the driving force was mainly Parisian—a fact which goes far to explain the course of French politics during the next two years. The Girondin chiefs, now installed in office, possessed little power; it rested with the men of the streets and of the clubs; and the nominal leaders always followed the spasmodic impulses of a populace agitated by Marat and infuriated by the threats of vengeance that came from *Émigrés* serving with Brunswick's army.

The psychology of Revolution renders difficult the maintenance of peace with neighbouring States of the old type. Suspicion and aversion naturally set in; and these are the parents of war. Nevertheless, proofs abound that, from August to October, 1792, Pitt and Grenville sought to continue the policy of strict neutrality which they had laid down as their guiding principle. True, they decided to recall Earl Gower from Paris, an act which seemed to betoken illwill. But Grenville at once informed him, and through him the Revolutionary Government, that his recall followed as a matter of course on the lapse of the authority of Lewis XVI, to whom he had been accredited, and was "conformable to the principles of neutrality which His Majesty has hitherto observed." Lebrun, the new Minister for Foreign Affairs, welcomed this announcement and expressed a hope for the continuance of friendly relations, especially in commercial matters. The credentials of Chauvelin, French Envoy at London, having been signed by the deposed monarch, he was informed that he could no longer be officially recognised¹; but he was

¹ O. Browning, *Despatches of Earl Gower* (1790-2), p. 209; *Ann. Reg.* 1792, pp. 327-8.

received unofficially. For some time, he offered no objection to this arrangement; but later, whether from injured vanity or from a desire (as an ex-noble) to show his democratic ardour, he represented it as a slight to the French Republic. His frequent association with Opposition clubs in London tended to annoy Ministers, but assured his popularity in Paris. Unfortunately, during the autumn his appointed adviser, Talleyrand, fell under the suspicions of the French Convention, which decreed his arrest. He, therefore, remained in London, and his sage warnings conveyed to Paris against the aggressive tendencies of French policy remained unheeded¹.

The characters of the French Ministers were calculated to inspire distrust and dislike in George III and his advisers. Danton's appointment as Minister of Justice seemed a hideous farce; Roland for Home Affairs was a respectable nonentity; Clavière, originator of the *assignats*, became responsible for Finance; and Foreign Affairs fell to Lebrun, an adventurous journalist, well versed in the Belgian disputes, but otherwise displaying the half-knowledge and consequent conceit which marked his patrons, Brissot and Dumouriez². With such Ministers, ever impelled by Robespierre and the all-powerful Commune of Paris, there was reason to expect the extension of Jacobin propaganda and the widening of the circle of hostilities. Yet Pitt and Grenville showed no sign of joining the party that called for intervention on behalf of the cause of monarchy. They differed even more sharply from Burke, on grounds not only of sentiment but of policy. They believed royalists of the old school to be a less potent force in home politics than radical reformers, whose influence would be enhanced if the cause of peace were associated with them. The great Irishman scouted these calculations as both timid and false. He dreaded revolutionary principles as a pest which, if not stamped out, would in its rank growth desolate all nations. Pitt, and to a less extent Grenville, trusted in the inherent strength of British institutions and their consequent immunity from Gallic ailments, formidable only to weakly organisms. Stripped of its literary adornments, Burke's crusading policy was one of pessimism and panic. Their policy, on the other hand, however briefly and baldly set forth, was nevertheless one of trust in the good sense of the two nations and in the principle of non-intervention. So late as November 6th, 1792, Grenville wrote that

¹ For his *Mémoire* of November 25th, 1792, see Pallain, *Le Ministère de Talleyrand sous le Directoire* (App.), and a summary in Sorel, III, 221-3.

² A. W. Miles, *Corresp. on the French Rev.* I, 24, 144-6.

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he had, throughout, disapproved of the invasion of France by the Austrian and Prussian armies as tending to consolidate the power of the Jacobins and delay the reestablishment of order. He now expressed some apprehension lest Republican principles should spread into England, but deemed the danger minimised by the maintenance of a policy of non-intervention¹.

The comparative passivity of George III during this crisis in the fortunes of monarchy is not a little curious; but it may be explained by his dislike of a policy of costly adventure, his desire, owing to the growing claims of his family, to reduce national expenditure, his trust in Pitt and Grenville, and his inveterate dislike of Burke. He also utterly distrusted the quixotic proposals of Gustavus III of Sweden for the rescue of Marie-Antoinette by armed force². On September 22nd, while at Weymouth, he approved the somewhat bold proceeding of Grenville in discouraging similar appeals from Vienna and Naples on her behalf, and added these words: "Undoubtedly there is no step that I should not willingly take for the personal safety of the French king and his family that does not draw this country into meddling with the internal disturbances of that ill-fated kingdom³." He viewed the Revolution as a series of disturbances judicially inflicted by Providence on France as a penalty for her intervention on behalf of the American rebels against divinely constituted authority, and therefore discountenanced any attempt to shorten the period of retribution. Thus it came about that, even after the September massacres at Paris, Burke's fervid appeals for action remained mere echoes in the void.

Alike in temperament and conviction, the men who guided British foreign policy were averse from a policy of warlike adventure. A decade of unremitting efforts in the direction of retrenchment and reconstruction attested the devotion of Pitt to the cause of peace. From this, as the sequel will show, he was with great reluctance drawn aside by the course of events; and to it he sought to return at the earliest opportunity compatible with prudence. Had he possessed

¹ *Dropmore Papers*, III. 463-7; Burke's Works (Bohn edit.) v. 231-3; *Auckland Journals*, II. 464-6; J. H. Rose, *Pitt*, part II. ch. II.

² Klinckowström, *Fersen et la Cour de France*, I. p. 173.

³ *Dropmore Papers*, II. 317. Even on November 25th, George wished for a general peace, if it could be made "to the real satisfaction of the parties concerned" (*Ibid.* II. 339). This corrects the statement of E. D. Adams (*The Influence of Grenville on Pitt's Foreign Policy*, p. 21) that after September, 1792, George III was hostile to France. It was her Decrees of November 16th and 19th, 1792, which changed his attitude.

more imagination, greater foresight, and a readier power of expression, he might perhaps have succeeded in appealing to the heart of France during the negotiations of 1795-7, and have stood forth as the pacificator of Europe. But in his nature there was too much of the Grenville stiffness for him to understand, still less to placate, Gallic susceptibilities. In truth, he had no knowledge either of Continental peoples or their politics. But as to his longing for peace there can be no doubt¹. Equally certain is it that his mistakes during the period 1793-1805 arose largely from inability to grasp the stern exigencies of war and the calculating selfishness which it often engenders in the conduct of Allies towards one another. Virtuous, high-souled, patriotic and intensely hopeful, he lacked the critical faculties, especially those of distrust and detachment, which are needed for the unravelling of intrigues, the detection of rogues, or a due appreciation of the chances of success and failure in complex enterprises. He understood mankind in the abstract, but he did not understand men. Therefore, while excelling in the more familiar spheres of British statecraft, he fell short of full success at a world-crisis. His nature was far better suited to the decade of reconstruction than to that of revolution.

Similar limitations marked even more strongly the character of his cousin. Lord Grenville's accession to the Foreign Office in the spring of 1791 marked the definite triumph of a pacific policy; but a certain austerity of manner and narrowness of outlook hampered his usefulness at all times. Uninspiring, prolix and somewhat tactless, both as a speaker and writer, he chilled his friends and irritated his enemies; so that, in 1794, we find him expressing to Pitt a wish at the termination of the War, to retire from his uncongenial duties². We shall not be far wrong in connecting this desire with his later confession: "I am not competent to the management of men. I never was so naturally, and toil and anxiety more and more unfit me for it." A phrase of Windham's explains this failure: "He [Grenville] knows nobody and is known by nobody." Yet that acute observer pronounced him well-informed, high-minded, and more imbued than Pitt with ideas of national dignity. In Windham's view, the Prime-Minister was, also, unacquainted with mankind and too disposed to live on by making concessions and "tiding it over"³. In these respects, Grenville

¹ *Malmesbury Diaries*, II. 101, III. 96, 516; Sorel, II. 383. R. Guyot, *Le Directoire et la Paix de l'Europe*, p. 303.

² *Dropmore Papers*, II. p. 513. See, too, *Malmesbury Diaries*, II. 441, for Grenville's predilection for non-intervention on the Continent.

³ Stanhope, *Pitt*, II. 122; *Malmesbury*, III. 590.

supplied backbone to the more pliant and pacific nature of Pitt; but in knowledge of men and management of Parliament they both so far yielded the palm to that versatile *bonvivant*, Henry Dundas, that the Administration was dubbed Scottish. To Dundas, however, and his impulsive and acquisitive ways Grenville felt an instinctive aversion which was to become more marked as he gained in experience of his own. His career is remarkable for the growth of confidence in the great qualities of the British people; and it is hardly an exaggeration to say that his will-power, patriotic pride and indomitable persistence provided the mainspring of the first two Coalitions against France. Grenville, however, lacked the wide sympathies, imaginative outlook and inspiring influence that mark a leader of men. To him, still more than to Pitt, the French Revolution was incomprehensible. He sought to combat it with the old weapons in the traditional ways. Therefore, despite his constancy, honesty of purpose and unflinching courage, he figures merely as an able Minister of George III, but unequal (like most of his colleagues) to the novel demands of the Revolutionary era.

Henry Dundas, Secretary of State for Home Affairs, supervised far more than the business of that Department and, in fact, claimed participation in all affairs of moment. To him Pitt entrusted the chief oversight of executive war policy; and in this sphere his unbounded energy and assurance not seldom led him to impulsive and diffuse designs. Indian affairs interested him intensely, and, from 1792 onwards, the development of British influence in the Mediterranean was his special care. For the present, he opposed all interference with France. So late as November 25th, 1792, he wrote: "I think the strength of our cause consists in maintaining that we have nothing to do with the internal politics of foreign nations¹."

The Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs up to the year 1795 was James Bland Burges, 1751-1814, who was unremitting in his warnings as to French aggressiveness and the danger of democracy. He, probably, inclined Grenville to the stiffer attitude adopted from November to December, 1792. On December 18th, he wrote to Auckland that a war with France was inevitable, and the sooner it came, the better; for public opinion in England was excellent, and there was "an earnest desire to go to war with the French²." Bland Burges was

¹ Veitch, *The Genesis of Parliamentary Reform*, p. 235. For mordant attacks on Dundas, see Fortescue, *British Statesmen of the Great War*, and *Hist. of the British Army*, vol. iv. parts I. and II.

² Brit. Mus. Add. MSS. 34446.

probably the only one of our leading officials or diplomats who had as yet come to this conclusion. We may note here that, in 1794, he received a hint from Grenville that his services would be better appreciated abroad; and, on ignoring it, he was superseded by a friend of his chief. George Hammond, who became his successor in October, 1795, had been British Envoy at Washington.

The influence of our Ambassadors has rarely counted for more in the shaping of Foreign Policy than in this period; for, as the ablest of them noted in 1785, Ministers at home were too engrossed in parliamentary affairs to attend to events on the continent. "I never yet received an Instruction that was worth reading¹." This irreverent assertion (less applicable after Grenville's acceptance of the Foreign Office) was made by Sir James Harris [1746-1820], who in 1788 became Baron, and afterwards first Earl of, Malmesbury. After the retirement of Sir Murray Keith from the embassy at Vienna, Malmesbury was the most distinguished, though not the most important, personage in the British Diplomatic Service². In 1792-3, his predilections were hostile to France, and his severance from the Foxites in 1793 paved the way for diplomatic missions of the first importance. The doyen of the diplomatic circle was then William Eden, first Baron Auckland (1744-1814). As Ambassador Extraordinary at the Hague in 1790-3, he displayed exceptional activity in the acquisition of news, for which his position gave him unequalled facilities; and his intimacy with both Pitt and Grenville contributed to the enriching of a correspondence which is of prime importance. Auckland advocated strict neutrality in regard to French affairs: "Our general wishes on the one hand" (he wrote on September 18th, 1792) "are that France may never again resume the same restless and troublesome system which has so often been fatal to the peace of nations; and, on the other, that an executive government may exist there so as to restrain the present lawless and atrocious spirit." He, also, agreed with Grenville in thinking that the armed intervention of Austria and Prussia only emphasised the disorders in France which it was designed to crush³. On November 9th, he suggested tentatively to Grenville the advisability of recognising the French Republic (in order to ensure Lewis XVI and Marie-Antoinette against violence) and

¹ Malmesbury, *Diaries*, II. 112.

² Cf. *ante*, pp. 160 ff., as to the personality and early achievements of *le rusé et audacieux Harris* (as Mirabeau termed him).

³ *Journal and Corresp. of Lord Auckland*, II. 443, 465.

The atmosphere being charged with electricity in both the east and the west of Europe, the only wise course for the British Government was to maintain a watchful aloofness. But an unkindly fate began to extend the storm area over these islands. The persistent rains, which hindered Brunswick's operations in Champagne, also ruined the harvests of Great Britain and the north of France, thereby causing widespread dearth and an eager competition for foreign corn. Hence arose not only commercial tension between the two nations, but internal discontent, resulting, on both sides, in a notable increase of democratic and levelling ardour. These sentiments, again, were accentuated by the astounding triumphs of the French arms. September saw the Austro-Prussian forces retreat from Champagne and the Sardinians driven from the capital of Savoy; in October, the Allies recrossed the Rhine in disorder; early in November, the French occupied Frankfort and utterly defeated the Imperialists at Jemappes—a victory which laid at their feet the Austrian Netherlands and brought the victorious tricolour to the borders of the Dutch Republic¹.

In the nervous and irritable state of public opinion, these events wrought a magical change. The French were filled with boundless confidence in the complete triumph of democracy over all the old Governments; and cognate aspirations spread among their many sympathisers in the British Isles. The sharp rise in prices favoured the growth of discontent, which found expression in numerous "Constitutional clubs," where the principles of the new French Constitution were vehemently acclaimed. The next development was destined to have far-reaching results. Delegates from the most important of these clubs, especially those of London, Newington, Manchester, Derby and Norwich, proceeded to Paris, and read to the Convention addresses of congratulation and fraternity at the sittings of October 31st, November 7th, 10th and 28th. The address bearing the signatures of Thomas Hardy and Maurice Margarot declared that the Elector of Hanover was uniting his troops to those of traitors and robbers; but that England was not Hanover.—"A Triple Alliance, not of crowned heads, but of the people of America, France and Great Britain, will give liberty to Europe and peace to the world²." These addresses, which were circulated throughout France, created the

¹ Jomini, *Guerres de la Révolution*, Bk II. chs. IX. X.

² "A Collection of Addresses...to the Nat. Convention of France," London, Debrett, 1793; *Ann. Reg.* (1793), pp. 344-352. Veitch, *op cit.* pp. 221-230, 363-6; *Moniteur*, November 8th and 12th, 1792.

impression there that the British people would support France in any effort made by her on behalf of democratic movements in other lands.

The French Convention, hereupon, conceived aggressive designs. Already, it had ostentatiously favoured addresses from Dutch "Patriots"; and, elated by the occupation of Brussels and by promises of support from British and Dutch democrats, it passed the Decrees of November 16th and 19th. By the former, the navigation of the Scheldt and the Meuse was declared open to and from the sea, though the Dutch Republic, by the terms of the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), absolutely controlled that navigation within its borders. On the same day, the French Executive Council resolved that Dumouriez should pursue the enemy even on Dutch territory, if he took refuge there. On the 19th, the Deputies of France decided to grant fraternity and assistance to all peoples desirous of recovering their liberty. Lebrun laid great stress on the Scheldt Decree, and, on November 30th, communicated a dissertation on the subject to Chauvelin, in which he spoke of it as an affair decided by the imprescriptible laws of universal justice, which France must have the courage to apply¹. By that time, he must have known of the British Declaration to support the United Provinces at all points; but his language implied a resolve to go to war rather than compromise on this head. The importance of the Scheldt question has often been denied. Now, it may freely be granted that the right of the Dutch to close the navigation of that estuary to all other vessels was *per se* unjust². But they had enjoyed it since 1648. So late as 1785, France had formally recognised it; and to abrogate it without consultation was an unheard-of proceeding. Moreover, most Dutchmen clung to the privilege in question. In 1784, the Grand Pensionary declared that the Netherlands ought to expend their last florin in maintaining it³.

Meanwhile, the conditions which induced the French Convention to pass these decrees, also led the British Ministers stiffly to oppose the first signs of aggression. In mid-October, they prepared to reassure the King of Sardinia by a Declaration stating, *inter alia*, that the retention of Savoy by France would create a new order of things which Great Britain could not accept⁴. But far more significant was

¹ Sorel, III. 233.

² Cf. *ante*, ch. I, pp. 161 ff.

³ Malmesbury, *Diaries*, II. 89: see, too, Marsh, *Politics of Great Britain and France*, chs. x, xi, xiii.

⁴ *Dropmore Papers*, II. 322. On November 27th, the French Convention annexed Savoy to France (Sorel, III. 203).

their action on receipt of the news that the French forces were before Brussels. Antwerp would be the next stage; and the siege of that stronghold must bring up the vexed question of the navigation of the Scheldt estuary. Moreover, on its banks, France would impinge on territory which for naval and commercial reasons England has never, since the days of Edward III, allowed to pass into the hands of a great rival Power. From the time of the battle of Sluys to that of the battle of Jutland, her action has been consistent on this head; and her resolve now to warn the French off the Scheldt estuary and neighbouring coasts opened the struggle which ended in 1815 with the expulsion of Napoleon from Belgium.

On the receipt at Whitehall of the news of the evacuation of Brussels by the Austrians, the Dutch Ambassador, Nagel, took alarm and came to Pitt to request advice and help. Pitt suggested the despatch of notes to the two German Powers offering mediation, with a view to ending the War with France. Grenville met the crisis more stiffly. He at once informed Auckland at the Hague that the danger to the Dutch must be encountered firmly—"for, much as H.M. desires to maintain peace, he does not hesitate to aid the Dutch Republic against any attempt to invade it or disturb its Government¹." Accordingly, he forwarded a Declaration to that effect, which was at once to be delivered publicly to the States General of the United Provinces. It assured them of H.M.'s "determination to execute at all times with the utmost good faith all the different stipulations of the treaty of alliance so happily concluded in 1788," but added that the correct conduct of the two nations ought to remove all grounds of apprehension. Auckland delivered it to the States General on November 16th—the very day on which the National Convention passed the Decree abrogating the rights of the Dutch over the estuary of the Scheldt and the Meuse. The States General thanked the British Government for its assurances of support, but expressed the hope that it might not be needed. The Stadholder, Prince William V of Orange, in a letter dated November 16th, thanked King George III for the Declaration, and suggested that British warships should be moored in the Downs, in readiness to proceed to the Scheldt if occasion demanded. It soon arrived. On November 22nd, the senior

¹ F.O. Holland, 41, Grenville to Auckland, "most secret," November 13th, 1792. Pitt also believed that "the explicit declaration of our sentiments is the most likely to prevent the case occurring." See, too, Pitt to the Marquis of Stafford, November 13th, 1792 (*Diaries*, etc. of the Hon. G. Rose, I. 115); also my article in the *Eng. Hist. Rev.* (January, 1912).

officer of two French gunboats at Rammekens demanded, in the name of Dumouriez, the right to pass up the Scheldt "*pour faire prospérer les armes de la République Française*"—obviously, in order to assist their land forces in reducing the Austrian garrison of the citadel of Antwerp. The Dutch authorities refused permission, but secretly instructed the commander of their guardship not to use force if the gunboats persisted in forcing a passage. They did so, and were soon reinforced by more powerful craft. Auckland explained to Grenville, that the Dutch intended "to temporise as far as may be practicable without essential disgrace or detriment"; but Nagel made a strong appeal to the British Government for succour to a faithful Ally in view of the imminence of a French invasion¹. In fact, the Dutch were utterly unprepared for war, and saw with alarm a large French force on their borders, having all but open communications with the mal-content "Patriots" who sought to overthrow the Dutch Constitution. The chief difficulty of the situation lay in the Dutch Government not daring to plead openly for British succour, lest the French should burst in, with the aid of the Patriots. To temporise and quietly prepare for defence was therefore the only prudent course. Grenville understood their difficulties, and hoped by maintaining a firm attitude to conjure the danger.

The occurrence of riots in parts of Great Britain, also, alarmed him; and he concluded that there was a close connexion between the aggressive policy of the National Convention towards the Netherlands and the republican propaganda in these islands. On hearing of the Scheldt Decree (on or just before November 27th), he wrote to Auckland: "There is, I am afraid, little doubt that the whole is a concerted plan to drive us to extremities with a view of producing an impression in the interior of the country, which I trust and hope will fail." These statements (repeated even more strongly in his letter of December 4th) differ entirely from those of November 25th, when he heard from Auckland of a possible opportunity of setting on foot an informal negotiation for a general peace, through the medium of a French agent in Holland. Grenville then commended the scheme and secured a guarded expression of approval from George III². Two days later, after hearing of the Scheldt Decree, he completely changed his language; and thenceforth he never swerved

¹ F.O. Holland, 41. Nagel to Grenville, November 29th; Auckland to Grenville, November 27th, 30th.

² *Dropmore Papers*, II. 339, 341, 344. His letter of November 14th to the Marquis of Buckingham makes light of the supposed sedition. (*Mems. of C. J. Fox*, III. 29.)

in his resolve to oppose the novel pretensions of France. On November 30th he informed Auckland that a small squadron of observation would be sent to the Downs. On December 7th, owing to the outbreak of sporadic disorders, the Government issued a Proclamation ordering the embodying of the militia in certain counties, in consequence of the conduct of evil-disposed persons "acting in concert with persons in foreign parts"—a statement repeated in the King's Speech of December 13th. Fox denied the existence of seditious practices, and denounced Ministers for creating and utilising a panic. The charge has been repeated; but the utmost that can fairly be urged is that they exaggerated the connexion between British democrats and French aggressions. Such a connexion undoubtedly existed; but it was unfair to charge our democrats with consciously provoking French action. All the addresses to the National Convention were drawn up, and half of them presented, before that body passed the aggressive Decrees which occasioned the *volte-face* of November 27th in British policy.

War was certain to result from the decisions of the British and the French Governments, publicly announced on November 16th, unless one side gave way. But to give way was difficult; for principles, considerations of honour and material interests were alike at stake. Great Britain took her stand on the sanctity of treaties; France, on the imprescriptible laws of nature as to the navigation of rivers in general and the rights of Antwerp in particular. Great Britain was resolved to stand by her Dutch Ally; France, to support the Dutch Patriots in the attempt to reverse the events of 1787. Moreover, neither side could retreat without loss both of prestige and material advantages. For the French Republic, to secure control of the Dutch Netherlands involved a gain of power such as Lewis XIV had never achieved; for Great Britain, it meant the establishment of her rival in estuaries that threatened the mouth of the Thames and her long and exposed east coast. At bottom, the issue was naval, therefore vital.

Events now tended towards war. Dumouriez' occupation of Liège and his demand to enter Maestricht (over which the deposed Prince-Bishop had joint control with the Dutch) threw new light on the French Decree freeing the navigation of the lower Meuse¹.

¹ Nagel in a *note verbale* of November 29th to Grenville stated that French vessels were assembling at Dunkirk and Ostend to ascend the Meuse and Scheldt into the heart of the United Provinces. He begged for British support. (F.O. Holland, 41.)

Nevertheless, Pitt and Grenville endeavoured to come to a friendly agreement with the French Republic by means of informal discussions with a private French agent. On December 2nd and 14th, Maret (the future Duc de Bassano) had interviews with Pitt, the earlier of which promised a good understanding; but, in the later, Maret had to announce the resolve of his Government to adhere both to the November Decrees and to its demands for the recognition of the French Republic and of Chauvelin as a fully accredited Envoy. To the recognition of the Republic Pitt and Grenville might possibly have acceded at an earlier date; but that of Chauvelin (now a *persona ingrata* at Whitehall) was out of the question¹. With Maret in his place much more might have been accomplished, though probably, in any case, George III would have vetoed the recognition of the Republic. Fox's motion in Parliament on December 15th for sending a Minister to Paris to treat with the French Government was negatived. The occasion was rendered memorable by Burke, Windham and other Whigs taking their seats on the Ministerial side.

The French Convention now took a highly provocative step. In a Decree of December 15th, it declared for the suppression of the existing authorities in all districts occupied by the French troops, whose Generals were ordered to place under the protection of the French Republic the whole property of the deposed Government and of its adherents. Further, it invited the liberated people to accept the principles of liberty and equality, and to form a Provisional Government on those bases. Wide powers were, also, given to French Commissioners to provide means for the maintenance of the troops. Finally, it denounced as hostile any people which desired to preserve its Prince and privileged castes. This Decree, offering limitless opportunities of extortion, plunder and malversation, was an added threat to neighbouring nations².

To Grenville's practical mind, this profession of a desire to extend the bounds of liberty meant merely spreading the control of France over all lands which she coveted. Such is the dominant note of his reply of December 29th to a recent proposal of Catharine II for joint action of the Powers in setting bounds to the expansion of French power and influence. He stated that King George III saw with great

¹ For details of these interviews and those of Auckland with a French agent in the Netherlands, see Rose, *Life of Pitt*, II. chs. III. IV.; W. A. Miles, *Correspondence*, I. 61-72.

² Fox privately expressed horror at the Decree of December 15th and "thought war likely" (Malmesbury, *Diaries*, II. 482).

satisfaction the similarity of their views and, while abstaining from all interference in French domestic affairs, he would oppose the efforts of the National Convention to abrogate treaties and overturn all institutions in neighbouring countries. He, therefore, agreed with the Empress in desiring to form a League of the Powers, not for the purpose of imposing on France by force any form of government or Constitution, but in order to assure their own safety and curb French aggrandisement. In a covering letter of the same date to Whitworth at Petrograd, Grenville emphasised the distinction, already drawn in the Russian note, between the policy of imposing a particular form of government on France, and that of providing for the security of the other Powers. He then suggested tentatively that the Powers not at war should consult together as to the conditions which they might offer to the French—viz., “the withdrawal of their arms within the limits of the French territory, the abandonment of their conquests, the rescinding any acts injurious to the sovereignty or rights of any other nations, and the giving in some public and unequivocal manner a pledge of their intention no longer to foment troubles or to excite disturbances against other Governments.” If France assented to these terms, they would forego all thought of hostility to her and live in amity with her Government. If not, they would take active steps to secure those ends, and possibly require some indemnity for their exertions. For Great Britain and Russia, the War with France, if it ensued, would be mainly maritime and would assure supremacy at sea, especially if Spain did not join the French. Russia should induce Denmark and Sweden to stop all supplies going to France; and she might possibly send a force to be landed on the French coast under cover of the British fleet¹.

These pronouncements mark out clearly the line of policy which British statecraft was to follow down to 1815. They differ entirely from the original plans of Prussia and Austria, which aimed at the restoration of monarchy in France (together with considerable gains of territory at her expense) and very extensive acquisitions in Central and Eastern Europe. Great Britain desired little more than the *status quo ante bellum*, and was prepared to recognise the existing Government in France, in case it made peace and ceased all subversive propaganda. Catharine assented to these proposals, except that which referred to a negotiation with the French Government; for she refused to take any step which seemed to imply an acknowledgment of the

¹ F.O. Russia, 23; also in B.M. Add. MSS. 34446.

Republic. Whitworth toned down Grenville's expressions on this head, but without avail; the Tsarina scouted the thought of recognising any country in revolt from its lawful sovereign, and had, for this reason, refused to recognise the United States of America. In vain Whitworth pointed out "how difficult it would be for His Majesty to make the establishment of any form of government in France the pretext of a war with that country¹."

With a royalism so flaming as Catharine's the cool and cautious Grenville could with difficulty frame a concert. Her political creed corresponded very nearly to those of the Habsburgs and Hohenzollerns. But under this display of zeal there was cunning. Whitworth found reason for believing that her recent overture was prompted by a desire to stiffen the attitude of the British Government towards France, and thereby to increase the chances of a rupture between the Western Powers. Her scheme of partitioning Poland was maturing apace; and, on the 27th, he reported the general desire in Russian official circles that it should remain unknown in London until the Anglo-French rupture occurred. That wish was to be gratified; for on March 1st, the day on which the Partition Treaty was ratified, he stated that there was great satisfaction at our being forced into hostilities "without any further negotiation, from which it was always feared some pacific system might ultimately have resulted²." It soon appeared, then, that between the United Kingdom and the Great Powers there existed a deep contrariety. We could count on frank and complete union with only one State—the United Netherlands.

We may pass rapidly over the ensuing negotiations with France. They were complicated by the suspicion that Chauvelin was intriguing with British malcontents, and desired to bring about the overthrow of the Pitt Administration. Certainly, he was jealous of the preference shown by our Ministers to Maret; and, perhaps because Maret's tone was conciliatory, his was haughty. He associated ostentatiously with the Opposition, and announced the resolve of Lebrun not to retract the Scheldt Decree, but to insist upon the acknowledgment of the French Republic in the person of Chauvelin. He also boasted that, if he were not received as Ambassador, the height of his ambition was to leave England with a Declaration of War³. These assertions harmonised with the Report of the French

¹ F.O. Russia, 23. Whitworth to Grenville, January 22nd, 1793.

² *Ibid.* Whitworth to Granville, January 22nd, 25th, 27th, March 1st, 1793.

³ W. A. Miles, *Authentic Corresp. with Lebrun* (1792), p. 84; *id. Corresp. on the French Revolution*, 1. 369.

Diplomatic Committee, of which that mischievous busybody, Brissot, was chairman. In presenting it to the Convention on January 1st, 1793, Kersaint pointed out the vulnerable character of the British Empire, which could be revolutionised in Ireland and attacked with deadly effect in Canada and the East and West Indies. War, should it take place, ought to be considered as Pitt's War, not that of the British nation¹.

Chauvelin echoed these statements in his next notes, which elicited vigorous retorts from Whitehall. His reiterated claim to be considered the official representative of the French Republic met with a cold refusal. He also attacked the Aliens Bill for subjecting all foreigners, including himself, to official supervision (December 31st, 1792), alleging that that measure infringed the Commercial Treaty of 1786, which stipulated freedom of intercourse and sojourn for the inhabitants of both countries. But this Aliens Bill was less rigid than a similar measure adopted at Paris in 1792, which consequently had already infringed that Treaty and unequalled was Chauvelin's assertion that the refusal to grant him official implied a rupture of relations with the French Republic. If France, Grenville retorted that he (Chauvelin) could do without official explanations except as the Envoy of Louis XVI. If not, they would require such assurances that the Decree of November 16th would not intended to impugn Dutch rights, save in a matter of minor importance (the Scheldt), and that the Decree of November 16th was not applied to a community desirous of assuring its new-found liberty to a few seditious persons in that community—Grenville pointed out that a French flotilla had forced an entrance up the Scheldt in spite of Dutch protests, and that the French pronounced a resolution to set at naught treaties and the rights of British statecraft was also, that the later Decree was accompanied "by from the original on given to the promoters of sedition in this country restoration of rights made to them precisely at the time of this Decree." of territory and denied the imputation of harbouring illwill towards and East and enjoined her, if she desired to maintain friendship, "to *quo ante* her views of aggression and aggrandisement and to confine herself within her own territory, without insulting other Governments, without disturbing their tranquillity, without disturbing their rights." The whole despatch, though needlessly stern in form, proves that Pitt and Grenville did not object to the French Republic *per se*, but

¹ *Hist. parl.* xxii. 365-378; O. Browning, p. 278.

to its aggressive claims and subversive propaganda. Lebrun's answer of January 7th, was temperate in tone; but he refused to give way on the main point at issue, the Scheldt Decree. On the same day, Chauvelin wrote an acrid note respecting the Aliens Bill; indeed, on this and other topics his tone embittered the discussions. The points at issue were far from irreconcilable; and a tactful negotiator like Maret would perhaps have found means to effect a reconciliation.

The whole affair, however, was complicated by the deepening conviction of Grenville (perhaps also of Pitt¹) that the French were working hard to undermine the British and Dutch Constitutions, and that Dumouriez' forces were preparing to invade the United Provinces. Such was the news derived from a French agent at the Hague, who was on a confidential footing with the Grand Pensionary, and informed him secretly, but with absolute certainty, that the French would invade his country by January 25th. Grenville received this news on December 29th, and thereafter disregarded the pacific assurances of Lebrun and Chauvelin². His despatch of January 10th to Trevor at Turin implied that hostilities were imminent—an inference rendered the more probable by the shifty character of Dumouriez³. So far back as November 20th, that General wrote to Maulde, French Envoy at the Hague, that he intended to carry liberty to the Dutch as he had to the Belgians⁴. During his visit to Paris at the end of 1792, he seems to have convinced the French Ministers of the feasibility of that enterprise and of the immense results certain to accrue from it; for, on January 10th, the Executive Council sent secret orders to his second in command, General Miranda, to prepare to invade Dutch Flanders and Zealand within twelve days⁵. Probably, he would have done so, but for lack of food and transport. Grenville did not know of these orders; but the evidence coming from the Hague pointed to the imminence of a French invasion. Thus, when most of the British warships were about to be withdrawn from off Flushing in

¹ On December 13th, Noel, a French agent in London wrote to Lebrun describing Miles's informal efforts for peace and his assurances that Pitt was entirely for peace—more so than Grenville. Miles added: "*Ne craignez rien de notre armement*" (referring to the embodying of part of the militia and the sending of a small squadron to the Downs). Miles, *Corresp. on the French Revolution*, I. 68.

² *Dropmore Papers*, II. 360. For his reply of December 29th to Auckland, see *Appendix A*.

³ See W. Eliot's despatch of February 23rd, 1793 from Berlin to Grenville in *Appendix B*.

⁴ F.O. Holland, 41. Enclosure in Auckland's despatch of November 23rd, 1792.

⁵ "*Corresp. de Miranda avec Dumouriez...*" (Paris, 1793), pp. 3-8.

order that their crews might help the press-gang, the Prince of Orange begged that they might not depart, as their presence greatly encouraged his Government. On January 20th Grenville enclosed for Auckland's use a copy of the French plan of campaign, which had been secretly procured at Paris, and urged greater expedition in the Dutch defensive preparations. He also stated that the transactions with Chauvelin, and the manifestos recently issued by the Convention, left little doubt as to the resolve of that body to bring about a rupture. If the Dutch were attacked, a British force would be sent to aid in their defence. By that date, even Pitt deemed a war with France inevitable¹.

In all these discussions, the fate of Lewis XVI, which was then trembling in the balance, was scarcely mentioned. Obviously, the rupture would have occurred, even if his execution had not taken place. But, on the news of that event reaching London on January 24th, the Privy Council at once met and ordered the withdrawal of Chauvelin from the realm within eight days. Technically, this measure was correct, as that Envoy had been accredited by Lewis XVI and was received solely in that capacity. On his arrival at Paris, Brissot and the Diplomatic Committee drew up a report declaring that George III had not ceased, especially since August 10th, 1792, to give proofs of his malevolence to France and his attachment to the Coalition of the Kings; that he had violated the Anglo-French Treaty of 1786 and ordered armaments clearly intended against France; that he had just concluded a Secret Treaty of Alliance with the Emperor, and had drawn the Stadholder of the United Provinces into the same Coalition. These falsehoods found ready acceptance; and an inflammatory speech by Brissot decided the Convention to pass unanimously a Declaration of War against the King of Great Britain and the Stadholder (February 1st)². The inclusion of the latter in this Decree proved the aggressive designs of the French Government; for, whatever might be thought of the action of the British Government, that of the United Provinces had given no cause of offence. The acquisitive spirit of the Convention further appeared in the Decree of January 31st, annexing Nice, and in that of a few days later, annexing the Belgic Provinces, to France. It is also noteworthy that, among the charges drawn up in October, 1793, by the Jacobins against the Girondins as a party and against Brissot in particular, he and they were accused of brusquely

¹ Malmesbury, *Diaries*, II. 501.

² *Hist. Parl.* XXIV. 194-207.

proclaiming war against the British and Dutch peoples and other Powers which had not yet declared themselves¹.

It has often been stated that a conflict between Great Britain and the French Republic was inevitable because the one represented the old order, the other the new, so that between them there was a fixed antagonism. The statement is overstrained. There was no irreconcilable opposition between British statesmen and the French leaders, until the latter, amidst the exaltation produced by the conquest of Belgium, adopted an aggressive policy which was at variance with the best traditions of their predecessors. The French conquest of Belgium and the ensuing trial of Lewis XVI produced an artificial excitement, a flamboyant patriotism, an eager competition between Jacobins and Girondins each to outdo the other, which infused a dash of the old Chauvinism into the fanaticism of the new age. The heady mixture was not the true wine of the Revolution. It was nauseous to Talleyrand, the inheritor of the Mirabeau tradition; and, in his obscure lodgings in London, he had to look on helplessly while the fate of France and of Europe was decided by the coxcomb Chauvelin, the journalist-adventurer Lebrun and the charlatan Brissot. To assert that these men represented either France or the Revolution is to insult her and degrade her progeny.

Furthermore, the statement errs in assuming that George III, Pitt and Grenville desired to make war on the Revolution. The reverse is the case. Until near the close of 1792, the King wished to remain at peace. Pitt and Grenville disapproved of the two German Powers embarking on a monarchical crusade, because they foresaw its effect in identifying Jacobinism with France and, up to the end of November 1792, they hoped by an understanding with all the Powers to mediate with a view to a general pacification. They were, also, prepared to recognise such *de facto* rulers of France as should conclude peace—that is, to recognise the French Republic if it proved to be pacific and non-interfering. True, in Parliament, in December, 1792, they opposed the motion for sending a Minister to Paris; but, at the same time, they were quietly taking steps which might lead to the resumption of friendly relations, if France renounced her aggressive designs. For they were aggressive. The Scheldt Decree was a violation of a recent French Treaty with

¹ *Hist. Parl.* xxix. 435. For proofs that the so-called mission of Maret to London at the end of January was unauthorised, and that the pacific proposals of Dumouriez were unimportant and doubtful, see Rose, *Life of Pitt*, II. 109-111; W. A. Miles, *Correspondence on the French Revolution*, II. 62; Lecky (vi. 126) overrates their importance.

the United Provinces and infringed the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1788. The British Government has been blamed for laying too much stress on the Decrees of November 16th and 19th; but, viewed collectively, they constituted a claim to the right to abrogate treaties and interfere in the internal affairs of neighbouring lands. Moreover, the French authorities followed up the Scheldt Decree by action which revealed their design of making Antwerp a French naval port. Their whole conduct with regard to the Austrian Netherlands was such as to warrant the belief that annexation was intended. The Decrees of November, therefore, became, not only a test question with respect to the maintenance of treaties, but a matter of vital importance to Great Britain and the United Provinces.

On the other hand, the procedure of Pitt and Grenville must be pronounced stiff and ineffective. Without divulging too much of the sacrosanct treasures of the Foreign Office, they might surely have made it clear, not only to diplomats but to the two nations concerned, that British policy was essentially peaceful and aimed at achieving a just settlement of the War, with a view to the eventual recognition of any truly pacific Government established at Paris. A declaration of this kind would have at the same time allayed resentments in France and discontents at home. But Ministers allowed their good intentions to be shrouded by old-world reserve; and Grenville met the pert insistence of Chauvelin with an aristocratic *hauteur* which irritated that Envoy and played into the hands of the aggressive party at Paris. Pedantic insistence, there, on the imprescriptible laws of nature, and rigid adherence, here, to the text of treaties complicated a question which, with goodwill and tactfulness on both sides, might have been settled in a month. As it was, the two great nations of the West drifted into a conflict which stirred the dying embers of Continental strife into a mighty conflagration, destined to rage over the whole of Europe and finally to bring back the exhausted principals to the original point in dispute—Antwerp.

II

The divergence between the policy of Great Britain and that of the chief potentates of the Continent appeared very clearly so soon as they deemed her entangled in the dispute with France. The conduct of Catharine has already been described, and that of Austria and Prussia now claims attention. In the first days of 1793, Sir Morton Eden reported that Prussia was about to send her best troops against

Poland, and that his request to spare some for the defence of the United Provinces was disregarded. The reason became clear in the course of an interview which Grenville had at Whitehall, on January 12th, with the Austrian and Prussian Ambassadors, Count Stadion and Baron Jacobi. They stated the decisions of their Courts: that Prussia should obtain in Poland an indemnification for her expenses in the French War, and should, in return, withdraw her opposition to the long-cherished Habsburg plan of acquiring Bavaria in exchange for the Belgic Provinces. Grenville protested against this cynical scheme and pointed out "the mischief which must result to the common cause from such an evident act of injustice¹." But the transaction was irrevocably settled between Vienna and Berlin; for on January 19th Eden reported that the King of Prussia would no longer act as a principal in the French War, if these indemnifications were not forthcoming; also, that Russia had her plans for aggrandisement at the expense of Poland, those of Austria in that quarter being doubtful². On February 5th, when the French Declaration of War was known, Grenville informed the German Powers that Great Britain, while protesting against the Partition of Poland, would not oppose it by force; also, that, if France continued the War, the Great Powers must exact from her the renunciation of all her conquests and of "all policy of interference in the affairs of other States."

As this programme involved the abandonment by France of the Belgic Provinces, part of the Rhineland, Savoy and Nice (not to speak of Avignon), it opened the way to an understanding with the German Powers and the Empire, as also with Sardinia and the Pope; and this prospect undoubtedly encouraged the Empire to declare war on France, as it did on March 23rd, 1793. The Court of Turin also resolved to persevere in a contest which, without Britain's financial and naval assistance, must have been hopeless. On this territorial basis, then, the foundations of the First Coalition could be laid; but in the sphere of moral, as distinct from material, interests there was slight hope of an understanding, save with the smaller States threatened by France. Our attention may now be concentrated, first, on the formation of the Treaties which built up the First Coalition, secondly, on British efforts to secure the active cooperation of Prussia and to lessen the friction with Spain.

¹ F.O. Prussia, 27. Draft of January 12th, 1793, in Grenville's writing.

² *Ibid.* Eden to Grenville, January 19th. On February 5th, Eden was appointed to succeed Sir Murray Keith at Vienna. He arrived there at the end of the month.

Another relation which the Toulon affair brought to a crisis was that of the British Government to the French Princes and the Royalist party. Up to the month of August, 1793, the British Government declared its resolve not to intervene in favour of any party or form of Constitution. But the informal alliance with the Royalists of Toulon—perhaps, also, disgust at the deepening atrocities of the Reign of Terror—somewhat modified its attitude. It continued to discountenance the *Émigrés*. In common with all who had experienced their intolerable arrogance and old-world bigotry, British statesmen and commanders were determined to keep them at arm's length¹. But a very delicate situation arose in October, when it appeared that the Comte de Provence (afterwards King Lewis XVIII) who had assumed the title of Regent of France, proposed to proceed to Toulon; also, that the Spanish Court favoured the scheme as a means of increasing Spanish influence there. At once, British Ministers took alarm; for it was certain that Monsieur would dictate military and political measures, and would prevent the Allies from holding any territorial conquests as gages for the indemnities on which they were still hopefully counting. On October 22nd, Grenville fired off despatches to St Helens at Madrid and Drake at Genoa, bidding the former oppose the scheme and the latter, in the last resort, even prevent the embarkation of the Prince². His slow progress and the rapid success of the Republican arms prevented that harlequinade from taking place; but the whole affair strained our relations both with Spain and with the Royalists of Toulon.

While discouraging the "pure" Royalists, George III and his Ministers avowed their preference for a limited monarchy. In the Instructions, drawn up almost entirely by Pitt and signed on October 19th, for the three British Commissioners appointed to administer Toulon, there occurs this passage: "You will be particularly careful on all occasions in stating H.M.'s conviction that the acknowledgment of an hereditary monarchy and of Lewis XVII as lawful sovereign, affords the only probable ground for restoring regular government in France." A less distinctly monarchist Declaration, drafted by Grenville and issued from London on October 29th, stipulated merely that "some legitimate and stable government should be established, founded on the acknowledged principles of universal justice, and capable of maintaining with other Powers the accustomed

¹ F.O. Sardinia, 13. Mulgrave to Trevor, October 19th, 1793.

² Cottin, pp. 425, 428.

relations of union and peace." On this head, Grenville's policy was more flexible than that of Pitt and left the Administration free to treat with any French Government that did not pursue aggressive and subversive aims. Of this wider definition Pitt was glad to avail himself in the negotiations of 1796 and 1797; though by that time, as will duly appear, Grenville's predilections had become less pacific and rather more monarchical than those of Pitt¹. The British Declarations were less royalist in tone than those of our German Allies and far less so than the vehement professions of Catharine. Thus, by the autumn of 1793, the four Allies had taken up a standing not unlike that of the year 1814. For the present, their pronouncements placed them signally at variance with French Republicans, and tended to rally all of them round any Government which could drive out the invaders. Thus, the Toulon episode, which bred discord among the Allies, solidified Jacobin rule in France. By the end of the year, her soil was almost freed from the Allied armies—a result due no less to the fatuities of their Generals than to the blunders and selfishness of their Cabinets.

The signal failures of the Allies in the campaign of 1793 emphasised the need of securing substantial help from Prussia for that of 1794. That Court, however, seemed resolved to continue marking time on the Rhine, while acting energetically beyond the Vistula. Its guiding spirit was Lucchesini, formerly reader to Frederick II. Having espoused the sister-in-law of Bischoffswerder, the still powerful favourite, he had secret means of influencing the highly susceptible Monarch; and, by dint of cajolery or bullying, generally had his way. Though his policy was persistently anti-British and anti-Austrian, he had gained too great an influence over our Envoy, the Earl of Yarmouth. Pitt, therefore, advised the despatch of Lord Malmesbury on a special mission to Berlin to clear matters up. At Whitehall Ministers differed as to the value of Prussia's Alliance. Grenville was so convinced of her falseness as to advise the refusal of all further subsidies. Pitt was more hopeful; but, on October 9th, the Cabinet decided on the withdrawal of the subsidy and the transmission of remonstrances (toned down at Pitt's suggestion) to the Court of Berlin. It was well not to insist overmuch; for the Prussian Ministers could claim that they had as much right to crush the so-called Polish revolt as we had to extend British sway in the East and West Indies; and, later, the Anglo-Prussian Duke of Brunswick mildly reproved our exigence at Berlin. Frederick

¹ *Dropmore Papers*, II. 433, 438, 443; *Parl. Hist.* XXX. 1660; *Const.* p. 22.

William II, with all his defects, was not devoid of chivalry, and a personal appeal of George III to him would probably have cleared the air. As it was, the British remonstrance produced an angry counterblast, which Yarmouth explained as due to annoyance at our refusal to meet Prussia's lofty demands for payment of actions required by her treaty obligations¹.

The Prussian problem being insoluble except by consummate skill and tact, Yarmouth was superseded by Lord Malmesbury. On his way to Berlin, he stayed at the Hague, Brussels and Frankfort, in order to probe the situation. He found it unpromising. At Brussels, he met the Austrian Ambassador, Mercy d'Argenteau, formerly the Anglophobe counsellor of Marie-Antoinette, who now, under the chastening stroke of her execution, confessed that everything depended on the union of England and Austria. He extolled the exertions of the Duke of York's army, but declared that Austria had no further troops available except 10,000 in the Milanese. In his view, the conduct of the Prussians, both Ministers and Generals, was equally reprehensible and foolish; but Frederick William must understand that abandonment of this contest spelt ruin. At Alost, Malmesbury found the Duke of York indignant at the mismanagement of the campaign, and his officers discontented or even insubordinate. At Frankfort, he gleaned useful hints from the Dutch Envoy, Vice-admiral Kinckel, as to the influences, male and female, which played upon the Prussian monarch, and as to the success of that arch-intriguer Lucchesini, in removing from the royal councils all friends of Austria and Great Britain. Austria's representative, Count Lehrbach, was unpopular, owing to his rough overbearing ways. The Prussian Court, therefore, oscillated between hatred of French principle and fear of Russia, the dominating motive being to incorporate thoroughly its late gains in Poland and to leave Austria beggared by her Rhenish campaigns. An imperious necessity, however, controlled these oscillations. The treasury at Berlin was nearly empty. Frederick William having squandered money on mistresses and official embezzlers, four-fifths of the treasure inherited from Frederick the Great had vanished; and Prussia possessed no system of finance capable of meeting the huge yearly deficits².

Herein lay the secret of Frederick William's complaisance to

¹ *Dropmore Papers*, II. 442, 446, 470.

² Malmesbury, *Diaries*, III. 14-23; Vivenot, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Politik Oesterreichs*, IV. 11 et seq.; F.O. Prussia, 28. G. Rose to Grenville, November 3rd, 1793.

Ypres and the lines of the Lys and Sambre; but the Imperialists now pointed out that the British and Dutch contingents were 30,000 below strength¹. Worst of all, a revolt of the Poles strengthened the Francophil party at Berlin, which always received powerful support from the King's uncle, Prince Henry. Finally, the British Envoy induced the chief Prussian Minister, Count Haugwitz, to suggest the transference of the negotiation to the Hague. There, on the scene of Malmesbury's former triumphs in 1787-8, they concluded a Treaty (April 19th, 1794), whereby Prussia was to supply an army of 62,400 men, under a Prussian Commander-in-chief, for service against France, Great Britain and the United Provinces paying her £50,000 a month and £300,000 for initial expenses, also her costs in bread and forage, calculated at the rate of 32 shillings a month per head. The movements of this army and the conquests made by it were to be at the decision and disposal of the Maritime Powers. Of the yearly subsidy Great Britain was chargeable for £1,600,000 and the United Provinces £400,000 a year; also, for the other expenses in similar proportion. The Treaty was framed ostensibly for the year 1794, but a separate article stipulated its renewal and for the duration of the War².

Malmesbury had somewhat exceeded Grenville's instructions; but he could plead that only by liberal payments to Prussia could she be induced to act with vigour. As the compact aided her finances, spared those of Russia, and promised to fulfil the aims of the Allies, it should have formed the basis of a stable Coalition. Various circumstances, however, militated against it. *Inter alia*, Pitt and Grenville recalled Malmesbury to London for further information, but, on his arrival, were so absorbed in the suppression of sedition as not to see him or provide for the payment of the first subsidy during nearly three weeks. The delay was disastrous. It gave a handle to the Francophiles at Berlin, and they seem to have won over to their side Haugwitz, whose constancy had always depended on the influence of Malmesbury. Thereafter, the Count always shunned meeting him³. Lucchesini now had his way at Berlin, the result being that Möllendorff, commanding the subsidised Prussian army, was induced to raise various difficulties as to the method of its employment beyond the Lower Rhine. Seeing that the Austro-British force under Clerfaut and the Duke of York, on May 18th, suffered a heavy defeat at

¹ Vivenot, IV. 367.

² Martens, v. 283; Garden, v. 233; Malmesbury, *Diaries*, III. 91-3.

³ Malmesbury, *Diaries*, III. 91-6.

Turcoing-Roubaix, the arrival of the Prussians for the defence of the United Provinces was urgently necessary¹. The British and Dutch Envoys, General Cornwallis and Kinckel, added their arguments to those of Malmesbury during lively interviews with the Marshal near Mainz, but failed to overcome his objections to so lengthy a march. Malmesbury discovered that the Anglophobes of the Prussian Court had been influencing him; and, in the absence of Haugwitz, Baron Hardenberg seemed to be the only official at Prussian headquarters, anxious for the fulfilment of the Treaty. Hardenberg consented to represent to Möllendorff the disgrace and isolation which must befall Prussia, if, after receiving the British and Dutch subsidies, she failed to perform her bounden duty to those hard pressed Allies. It was in vain. Not without some show of reason, the septuagenarian Marshal represented the immense difficulty of a march northwards, and kept his army in cantonments with the maximum of economy, British and Dutch money being therefore available for the other requirements of Berlin².

Meanwhile, events had occurred which began to awaken jealousy of British maritime power. The occupation of the French colony of Hayti and the conquest of Tobago and Pondicherry in 1793 were followed up, early in 1794, by the capture of Martinique and St Lucia, the keys to the West Indies. On June 1st, 1794, Lord Howe gained a decisive victory over the Brest fleet, thus confirming British naval supremacy. On the other hand the Anglo-Austrian forces sustained a serious reverse at Fleurus (June 25th). Thereupon, in pursuance of Thugut's policy, Coburg tamely evacuated the Belgic Provinces, abandoning the garrisons of Valenciennes and three neighbouring fortresses. Probably Thugut now cherished the hope that, if Belgium were to be recovered at all, it would be at the cost of Colonial sacrifices made by Great Britain for the sake of maintaining the Flemish Barrier system. Thenceforth, he took little interest in the recovery of Belgium. The entry of Austria's troops into southern Poland, early in July, manifested her intention to claim her share of the now imminent Partition³.

This event should have convinced British Ministers that Thugut's policy of finding an indemnity there for the loss of Belgium had definitely triumphed. Even in June, Whitworth reported from

¹ Fortescue, *Hist. of the Brit. Army*, iv. (Pt I), ch. x. Möllendorff always opposed the compact with England. See Hardenberg, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, I. 186.

² *Cornwallis Mems.* II. 248-256; *Dropmore Papers*, II. 577.

³ F.O. Austria, 37. Stratton to Grenville, July 9th, 1794.

Petrograd that the King of Prussia pressed the Empress Catharine to undertake a Third Partition. For a time, she seemed to disapprove, probably from a surmise that the scheme would palsy his efforts beyond the Rhine, and thereby leave Austria weak for the acquisition of her promised indemnities in that quarter. In July, however, her scruples seemed to vanish, and her only difference with Frederick William was as to Austria sharing in the proposed Partition¹. The Empress favoured it; he opposed it; but, after the Prussian troops had suffered sharp reverses at the hands of the Poles, his opposition relaxed. She, also, read him some severe lectures as to the evil influence of the former Partitions (primarily due to Berlin) on the struggle against France, and reminded him that she had shared in them only on condition of his waging war vigorously beyond the Rhine. There is no sign that these reproofs were received any more seriously than the original advice. But Whitworth continued to assure Grenville of Catharine's enthusiasm for the French War, in which, however, she reluctantly declined to participate until after the settlement of the Polish question².

The almost complete silence of Grenville on this question betokens a feeling of despair. Indeed, it is difficult to see how Great Britain, when immersed in the Revolutionary War, could have averted the Partitions. Certainly, neither Pitt nor Grenville assigned sufficient importance to these events. Pitt's knowledge of Continental politics, especially of those of eastern Europe, was scanty; and, looking at the European situation from a somewhat insular standpoint, both he and Grenville underestimated the drag of the eastern undertow. A signal proof of Pitt's hopeful half-knowledge appears in his Memorandum of July, 1794. While the Imperialists were evacuating Belgium, and Möllendorff refused to move northwards, the Prime-Minister insisted on the necessity of bringing up the total of the former to 100,000 men, with a view to the rescue of the besieged garrisons and the recovery of that land; he also demanded "the immediate march to Flanders of the army under Marshal Möllendorff." The hoped-for result of these combinations was to be the muster, by the spring of 1795³, of 238,000 Allied troops in Belgium.

¹ F.O. Russia, 27. Whitworth to Grenville, June 27th, July 18th, 1794.

² *Ibid.* Whitworth to Grenville, September 26th, October 14th, November 4th,

1794.

³ *Dropmore Papers*, II. 599-600. Grenville's note of July 19th to Spencer and T. Grenville gives an estimated total of 230,000—a proof of the close relations between him and Pitt. (F.O. Austria, 38.)

Pitt was, at this time, elated by the accession of the Portland Whigs, which left the Foxite or anti-War party a mere handful. One of the Old Whigs, Thomas Grenville, brother of the Minister, was now selected, together with Earl Spencer, to proceed on a special mission to Vienna for the purpose of stimulating Austria to further efforts by the prospect of her acquiring the French Barrier fortresses from Lille to Sedan¹. A further attempt to galvanise Möllendorff into activity was made by a Supplementary Convention with Prussia on July 27th, 1794, which renewed and extended the stipulations of the recent Treaty.

It was a characteristic of British policy, in this period, to make these convulsive efforts, after the misfortunes which prompted them had become irreparable. Spencer and Grenville, on their arrival at Vienna, found a very general disposition to give up the struggle. The Emperor had just dissolved his Government of the Belgic Netherlands², thus fulfilling the wishes of Thugut to be rid of that encumbrance. The Chancellor now founded his chief hopes on Catharine's intervening to keep Prussia in the right path. To the British Envoys he laid stress on the financial plight of Austria, and, insisting that she could not continue her efforts without a liberal subsidy, claimed for Vienna that which was wasted on Berlin. On August 12th, Thomas Grenville thus summed up the situation: "They (the Austrians) will, I fear, again play with us by giving orders to move when they get money only, and they will probably get none till the places are lost which they ought to recover³." In comparison with this dominant fact, the difficulty of Lord Grenville having omitted to specify how extensive a barrier the Emperor was to acquire from France seemed trivial. In truth, the Allies were about to lose all the French strongholds acquired in 1793; and, whatever promises were forthcoming at Vienna, performance was lacking. To keep up appearances, Coburg was replaced by Clerfait; but the retirement continued⁴. When the French advance threatened Maestricht, Clerfait called on the Duke of York with his scanty British and Dutch forces to rescue it, but himself remained inactive, in spite of vigorous protests from Downing Street. Early in October, he retired behind the Rhine⁵. The Dutch troops, dismayed

¹ F.O. Austria, 38. Despatch of July 19th.

² Vivenot, IV. 375.

³ *Dropmore Papers*, II. 614.

⁴ Pitt and Grenville wished the Archduke Charles to take over the command, with Mack as adviser. (F.O. Austria, 38. Grenville to Spencer and T. Grenville.)

⁵ Fortescue, IV. Pt I, ch. 11; Vivenot, IV. 365-8.

himself had made proposals as to the operations of such a force¹, and the recent engagement of his daughter Caroline to the Prince of Wales furnished another reason for his consent. Malmesbury, therefore, undertook the mission with some degree of hope, but he met with a refusal. The Duke made it clear that His Prussian Majesty vetoed the project². The Envoy passed judgment on Prussian policy as embodying "as many bad political qualities as can possibly exist at the same time in the same Power, weakness, perfidy, insolence, avarice and folly³."

The contempt felt by the Russians for their Prussian fellow-conspirators against the independence of Poland appeared in an incident at Warsaw. Scarcely had the King of Poland abandoned that city than the victorious Russians tore down the insignia from the Prussian embassy with every sign of contumely. Francis II so far demeaned himself as to congratulate the victor, Suvóroff, by declaring in a letter to him that his success would be the means of changing the system of all the Cabinets of Europe⁴. The fact was largely true, though the admission of it was needlessly humiliating. The fierce jealousies of the Central Powers subordinated them to Catharine; she virtually dictated the terms of the Third Partition now imminent, though it was not completed until October, 1795⁵. Great Britain, of course, was helpless to prevent this catastrophe. Thus, in the winter of 1794-5, as two years before, the scramble for Polish lands distracted the policy of Berlin and Vienna, nullifying all the efforts of Great Britain to construct a solid barrier against French aggressions in the West. When those efforts appeared to be futile, Pitt and Grenville turned to Russia, and concluded a Defensive Alliance, signed at Petrograd on February 18th, 1795, for granting mutual armed assistance in case either party was attacked, Russia furnishing 12,000 troops and Great Britain 12 sail of the line⁶.

Meanwhile, the Dutch in despair of defending their land, proposed to the British Government to enter into negotiations for a general peace. With this plan our Government did not comply, but signified that, if the United Provinces chose to seek their safety in a separate peace,

¹ *Paget Papers*, 1. 79.

² F.O. Prussia, 35. Malmesbury to Grenville, November 25th, 1794; *Paget Papers*, 1. 98.

³ *Dropmore Papers*, II. 653.

⁴ F.O. Poland, 8. Gardiner to Grenville, January 7th, 10th, 1795.

⁵ Sorel, IV. 447.

⁶ Garden, V. 297. Probably the treaty contained a secret article specifying Russia's naval help; for in June, 1795, she sent 12 sail of the line to reinforce the North Sea.

we would not oppose such a step¹. The overtures were abruptly ended by the French, so soon as weather conditions favoured a renewal of their advance. Before the utter collapse of the Allied defence on the Waal, Pitt and Grenville induced the King to recall the Duke of York². The leadership of that prince had been meritorious; but he was clearly unequal to the ever increasing difficulties ahead, not the least of them being the almost open insubordination of the British army and the active illwill of the Dutch. The Duke reported at Windsor that he was in every instance thwarted by the people whom he was trying to save³. Pitt further showed his zeal for the public service by substituting Lord Spencer at the Admiralty for the too leisurely Lord Chatham.

But no changes of men could as yet avail to turn the tide of events. What was needed was a change in the spirit of the nations concerned; and this came about only under the pressure of overwhelming calamities. The French Revolution, under the subtle alchemy of militarism, was to become by turns conquering, rapacious and tyrannical to its neighbours, until finally it was personified in the most awe-inspiring ruler of the modern world. Under his vigorous but oppressive sway, peoples previously torpid acquired new strength and a passion for independence unknown before. Rulers, too, were compelled to rely wholly on their subjects; and the national consciousness thus aroused on all sides served to endow peasants with patriotism, Generals with determination, officials with honesty and Governments with efficiency. That transformation, however, was to come only with a radical change in the methods of waging war and with the overthrow of the old governmental systems. So long as the Allies could jog along with hired troops and British subsidies, no reform was possible. The payment of such subsidies was irritating to the donor and humiliating to the receiver. It promoted exacting captiousness on the one side and slack performance on the other. Not until both parties could unite frankly and enthusiastically under the stimulus of a great cause could great deeds be accomplished. The story of the year 1794 is the story of the wreck of an imposing Coalition, partly through divergences of aim, but also through a demoralising reliance upon the cash-nexus⁴.

¹ *Dropmore Papers*, II. 646. Minute of Cabinet of November 18th, 1794. This corrects the misstatement of Garden (*Traité*s, v. 249), that we opposed the Dutch proposal.

² For the correspondence on this topic see Rose, *Pitt and Napoleon: Essays and Letters*.

³ *Dropmore Papers*, II. 644, 659.

⁴ Thus, a delay (due to bankers) in the payment of the July subsidy led Frederick William at once to order Möllendorff to halt, until the sum due was paid. (F.O. Prussia, 35, Paget to Grenville, July 26th, 1794.)

when necessary, of Dutch warships¹. The Patriots now opened negotiations with France, which resulted in an Alliance both defensive and offensive, directed especially against Great Britain (May 16th). France required from her new Ally the services of 12 sail of the line and 18 frigates, also of half of the troops at the disposal of the Dutch Government; she restored the conquered districts except the southern parts and the Maestricht territory, and secured the right to garrison Flushing. The United Provinces further agreed to pay 100,000,000 Dutch florins as an indemnity—a crushing fine, which the Committee of Public Safety deemed essential for the avoidance of bankruptcy². In return, the Dutch received a recognition of their Independence, which can scarcely have deceived even the most credulous of the Patriots. The rigorous conditions now imposed on the Dutch were of world-wide importance; for they extended the War more than ever over seas, and imparted to it, more and more, the character of a Colonial struggle. Foreseeing that the French would use the Dutch settlement at the Cape of Good Hope as a means of attacking India, the British Government prepared to strike at that strategic point, which was occupied, in September following, by Rear-Admiral Sir Keith Elphinstone and General Sir James Craig.

As has been shown in this Chapter, the War between France and Great Britain was not, for us at least, mainly a war of principle. The material issues at stake always outweighed those arising from a clash of political ideals. But now, the defection of Prussia and the Alliance of the Dutch with France transformed the struggle increasingly into one for Colonial and commercial supremacy. The change was to be rendered more complete by the most striking events of the year 1796, viz., the Anglo-Spanish rupture and the rise of Bonaparte.

The friction between the Courts of St James's and of Madrid never ceased during the period of uneasy alliance, (1793-5). To that old sore, Nootka Sound, there were now added the irritants often arising from seizures at sea, disputes during the joint occupation of Toulon and afterwards from the British occupation of Corsica. Despite the offer of Paoli to place that island solely under the protection of Great Britain, the Spaniards conceived a violent jealousy, when, after the reduction of the French garrisons by British seamen and troops, the assembly of chieftains at Corti proclaimed George III King of Corsica. Possibly, jealousy played some part in the unceasing in-

¹ F.O. Holland, 57; *Cape Records*, 1. 98; *Dropmore Papers*, 111. 35.

² R. Guyot, *Le Directoire et la Paix d'Europe*, p. 106.

trigues which perplexed the British Viceroy, Sir Gilbert Elliot (afterwards Earl of Minto), and clogged his administration. The French quickly took advantage of this marked divergence between Great Britain and Spain.

But, already, a more serious cause of dispute had arisen, when the French planters of Hayti, in despair at the anarchy devastating that once wealthy colony, offered to place it in the hands of George III. In April, 1793, the King consented, and an expedition was subsequently prepared to occupy the chief port of Hayti (San Domingo). Grenville, foreseeing annoyance on the part of Spain, who owned the central and eastern parts of the island, sought to turn her attention towards acquisitions in the south of France¹; but, after the servile revolt in the French part of Hayti, she revived her ancient claim to the whole of that island, and saw with disgust the occupation of the most fertile parts by the British. Among other influences hostile to the Alliance was that of the Spanish Ambassador at London, the Marquis del Campo, who exacerbated every dispute². The Minister of Marine, Don Valdez, also openly declared the weakening of the French navy to be a misfortune for that of Spain; and the all-powerful Duke of Alcudia finally used his unbounded influence over the Queen against the British connexion. Early in February, 1795, during an interview with the King and Alcudia, Valdez hotly declaimed against Great Britain for her ambitious proceedings in Hayti and Corsica. Alcudia repeated these charges to Francis Jackson, our Minister at Madrid, and warned him of the results that might ensue, adding: "If His Catholic Majesty finds another road less dangerous than that which he now follows, he will take it with the dignity becoming his rank." The French incursion into Catalonia and the utter failure of all British military efforts in Europe, added emphasis to this statement, and the Spanish Ministers hereupon adopted a hostile attitude. In vain did Grenville point out the advantages to Spain accruing from British naval successes, and hold out prospects of help from Russia in 1796. It soon appeared that Spain would make peace with France in 1795³.

In the hope of averting this disaster, Grenville despatched the Earl of Bute as Ambassador, with Instructions to placate the Court of

¹ See Grenville's despatch of July 19th, 1793 in *Appendix B*.

² *Dropmore Papers*, II. 383, 386, 398, 406; III. 10. The condemnation of the *San Iago*, a Spanish prize obtained by a French privateer, and rescued by a British war-ship, greatly annoyed the Spaniards.

³ F.O. Spain, 36. F. Jackson to Grenville, February 11th; March 18th, 1795. Grenville to Jackson, March 20th, 1795.

Madrid, and incite it to further efforts for the acquisition of territory north of the Pyrenees¹. The Instructions show that Grenville's tenacity clouded his imagination. For of what use was it to hold out such hopes to Spain, when Catalonia was in danger and French arms everywhere triumphed? But a phrase at the end of the despatch is highly significant. Bute is warned to observe closely the condition of the Spanish Colonies, and, if discontent exists, to ascertain where an attack may be delivered. From May to June, 1795, the accession of more moderate men to power at Paris and the reviving activity of the French Royalists induced Grenville to plead for help from Spain in a contemplated attempt to aid them in Brittany; but, by that time, Alcudia was deeply committed to negotiations with France. In April, 1795, he despatched an Envoy, Yriarte, to Bâle with instructions vague enough to leave him free to conclude peace. Yriarte, a friend of the French Ambassador Barthélemy, showed his bias by drafting proposals, early in June, for assuring a Franco-Spanish control of the Mediterranean and the complete exclusion of British trade². Such, doubtless, were the aims of Alcudia and Valdez. On June 23rd, Alcudia informed Bute that England and Spain would soon be left alone in the War, and that financial distress, added to the troubles in the Spanish Colonies occasioned by emissaries from the United States and France, compelled the Court of Madrid to accede to French invitations for a "composition"; but "composition" did not imply peace. Spain had begun the War in order to suppress French principles; but the conduct of the Allies had united the French people. "Somehow or other" (added Alcudia), "England always got the better of Spain." Bute's comment was that the only way to keep Spain true to the Alliance was to bribe Alcudia³.

But matters had gone too far even for this. The French negotiators, in view of the enormous advantages to be derived from the Spanish navy and commerce, gave way on certain points, and signed the Treaty of Peace at Bâle on July 11th, 1795. France thereby restored her conquests in the north of Spain, but acquired the Spanish portion of Hayti, and promised to acknowledge the mediation of the King of Spain for accommodations with Portugal and the Italian Princes at war with the Republic⁴. Considering the irritation caused by British

¹ F.O. Spain, 37. Grenville to Earl of Bute, April 13th, 1795.

² Tausserat-Radel, *Papiers de Barthélemy...en Suisse*, vi. 14.

³ F.O. Spain, 37, 38. Bute to Grenville, June 23rd; July 11th, 19th, 1795.

⁴ *Papiers de Barthélemy*, vi. 68 et seq.; Garden, v. 305-7; Sorel, iv. 368-70.

intervention in the west of Hayti, it is not easy to account for the joy manifested at Madrid at the news of a pacification which involved the abandonment of the whole of that island. The humiliation of the King was completed a few weeks later, when he conferred on his chief Minister, the Queen's paramour, the title of Prince of the Peace.

Grenville at once pointed out that the cession of San Domingo to France was a violation of the Treaty of Utrecht, which forbade Spain to cede to the French any of her American possessions; and he charged Bute to find out the strength of her forces in the West Indies. That Envoy, also, saw whither the recent compact tended, and foretold that it would soon be followed by war with England. He, therefore, warned Admiral Hotham, commanding the Mediterranean fleet, to be on his guard, and even hinted at a dash upon Cadiz¹. Grenville's despatches to Bute at Madrid prove that the British Government desired to keep at peace with Spain. The attack on San Domingo was postponed, because Godoy asserted that it was not yet a French possession; and in other ways deference was shown to Spanish susceptibilities. But all was in vain. In the year 1796, the prospect darkened, and Ministers at home, as well as Bute, expected a rupture whenever it should suit Spain to attack us. Godoy's private appeal in July, that we should not consider his recent Offensive Treaty with the French as a *casus belli*, was clearly a ruse to postpone hostilities to a more convenient time². On October 5th, Godoy handed to Bute the Declaration of War, the chief complaints of which referred to the conduct of Lord Hood at Toulon, the British conquest of Demerara, the occupation of Corsica and the west of Domingo, various naval incidents, and the establishment of British Commercial Companies along the river Missouri for the evident purpose of penetrating to the "South Sea." The rupture marked yet another stage in the transformation of the War into a commercial and colonial struggle. Its more immediate effect was the evacuation of Corsica, Elba, and the Mediterranean by the British forces, with the view of effecting a concentration in the Atlantic and in home waters. Its later results were the ruin of the Spanish navy, the capture of Trinidad and other Colonies, and the increase in the number of securities held by Great Britain as a set-off to the losses of her Allies on the Continent.

We have looked ahead, in order to survey connectedly Anglo-

¹ F.O. Spain, 38. Grenville to Bute, August 7th; Bute to Grenville, August 10th, 1795.

² See Despatches in *Appendix C*, also *Dropmore Papers*, III. 148, 214, 233, 246.

Spanish relations to the date of their rupture. But it is time to return to the autumn of 1795, which witnessed the first efforts of Great Britain for a general peace. By that time, the Coalition had sustained successive shocks in the defection of Tuscany, Prussia, Holland, and Spain; while the attitude of the Imperial Diet was doubtful and the prospects of Sardinia were gloomy. On the other hand, Great Britain had concluded Treaties of Alliance with Russia and Austria; her fleets had swept from the seas both the warships and the merchantmen of her enemies; she had captured, or was about to capture, their chief Colonies; her finances, though strained, were vigorous; and her spirit, in spite of sporadic riots, was undaunted. Accordingly, Parliament, at the opening of the autumn session, heard with some surprise the following sentence in the King's Speech (October 29th): "Should this crisis at Paris terminate in any order of things compatible with the tranquillity of other countries, and affording a reasonable expectation of security and permanence in any treaty which might be concluded, the appearance of a disposition to negotiate for a general peace on just and equitable terms will not fail to be met, on my part, with an earnest desire to give it the fullest and speediest effect." "Meanwhile" (the speech continued), "we must carry on the war with a vigour which would conduce to this desirable end." Ministers seem to have imposed their pacific views on George III; for, two days previously, he had written to Grenville that no attempt at negotiation ought to be encouraged, as it would tell against an active prosecution of the War¹. Further, it appears that the Duke of Portland, Windham and their Whig followers who had coalesced with the Pitt Administration regarded with apprehension or active dislike a policy which implied recognition of the Republic and the abandonment of the monarchical cause².

It may be well here to recall Pitt's pronouncements on the subject of negotiation with France. On January 26th, 1795, he deprecated them as tending to encourage the enemy and "to bury the remains of opposition in France." On March 24th, in combating a motion by Fox, he disclaimed all notion of fighting in order to impose monarchy on the French people; but he added that "we shall gain all possible aid from the French Royalists": and he defined our leading object as "security." On May 27th he resisted Wilberforce's motion in favour of early negotiations for peace on the ground that "perseverance in the contest is more wise and prudent, and more likely in the end to

¹ *Dropmore Papers*, III. 143.

² *Ibid.* III. 135.

effect a safe, lasting and honourable peace than any attempt at negotiation." Admitting the reverses of the Allies, he yet claimed that France was nearly exhausted, her *assignats* being worth less than 5 per cent. of their face value; and, viewing her Government as regicide, he declared: "I will not acknowledge such a Republic."

How, then, are we to explain the proffer of the olive branch on October 29th? Probably, it was due to recent events in France. The new French Constitution had not the ultra-democratic character of its predecessors; and, though the Royalist or malcontent risings at Paris and elsewhere had been crushed, the prospect had arisen of a return to ordinary methods of government. In Pitt's words, if the new deputies could "speak on behalf of the people of France, I then have no difficulty in saying, from that time all objections to the form of that Government, and to the principles of that Government, all objections to them as obstacles to negotiation will be at an end." He still hoped for success in the War, bade the country show a firm front, and reproved the Opposition for dwelling on the reverses of the Coalition.

The present suggestion, then, was little more than an appeal to the French people for reasonableness in their foreign relations. It resembled somewhat that suggested by the Austrian Chancellor early in April. Thugut had then proposed the issue of a proclamation to the French people, declaring that they had been the aggressors and urging them to adopt "a Government such as may enable foreign Powers to treat with them with security¹." British Ministers seem at the time to have passed by the suggestion, perhaps because Grenville harboured hopes of a Royalist reaction in France, which William Wickham was to further from the embassy at Berne. If we may judge by the number and length of his letters to Wickham, the usually cautious Grenville continued long to believe in this chimera². Evidently, he had not learnt the lesson, writ large on the Toulon episode, that foreign help during an internal dispute tends to the discredit and undoing of the party thus supported³. The lesson was once more to be illustrated, in ghastly guise, in the British-Royalist expedition to Quiberon. The failure, also, of all Wickham's emissaries to Lyons and other centres of anti-Jacobin activity proved that the Royalists distrusted outside assistance⁴, and that the French people wanted peace,

¹ F.O. Austria, 40. Eden to Grenville, April 8th, 1795.

² *Corresp. of W. Wickham*, I. pp. 9-86.

³ *Ibid.* I. 93.

⁴ Sorel IV. 350.

order, and the retention of the chief social conquests of the Revolution. The unpopularity of Lewis XVIII, his decision to stand by the principles of Henry IV, above all, the utter failure of the rising of the Royalists of Paris on October 5th, seem to have dispelled the hopes of Grenville. The baffling uncertainty as to obtaining military help, or even any definite decision, from the Court of Vienna, further disgusted him; and, though hitherto more favourable than Pitt to the Austrian connexion, he now decided to send Francis Jackson on a special mission, to press urgently for a decision, seeing that "we might possibly not find it very difficult to make either war or peace with advantage, if Austria will set her shoulders to the work in earnest¹." Grenville, then, though of late less pacific in tone than his cousin, was apparently not averse from a negotiation with France.

On December 8th, the King sent a message to Parliament, stating that the crisis in France had led to an order of things which would induce him to meet any disposition to negotiation on the part of the enemy. Sheridan and Grey challenged Ministers to say wherein the order of things in France differed from that of 1793-4; but Pitt declared that her Constitution and her conduct need no longer prevent an accommodation. The distinction which he drew was overstrained; but it is clear that he objected to the French Republic only because it had been a mighty agency for the propagation of levelling principles. This it had now ceased to be. At home its democratic fervour had died down; and, on all sides, the liberated peoples were crying out against their Jacobin liberators. As a conquering and acquisitive organism, the Republic aroused none of the enthusiasm inspired by the appeals of Vergniaud and the challenges of Danton. Pitt, therefore, viewed with no grave concern the recent Declaration at Paris, which in effect pronounced "the natural boundaries," to be an essential part of the new Constitution². Frenchmen have generally applauded that resolve. They forget that it has always involved a war with Europe. For the present, the helplessness of the Empire, the inertia of Austria, the short-sighted selfishness of Prussia, and the calculated aloofness of Catharine, postponed the struggle; but it lay in the nature of things; and British Ministers were not afraid of the prospect of a negotiation

¹ *Dropmore Papers*, III. 137; E. D. Adams, p. 37.

² Decree of October 1st, 1795 (Sorel, IV. 428-31, v. 2; Sybel, IV. 444 Eng. edit.). Soon after decreeing the natural boundaries, the French Government sent proposals to Vienna, offering Bavaria to Austria, if she would acknowledge the French annexation of the Belgic Provinces and not oppose that of the left bank of the Rhine—a bribe to her to desert England.

with France, which, if successful, would bring temporary relief, and, if unsuccessful, would exhibit the French Directors as the political heirs of Lewis XIV.

The sincerity of Pitt and Grenville in this overture for peace has been sharply questioned by Sybel, Sorel, and other historians; but the foregoing considerations both explain and justify the conduct of Ministers. Pitt, also—though perhaps not Grenville—assigned some weight to the news brought from Paris by Baron de Beaufort, to the effect that the Directory would gladly receive a pacific proposal¹. Doubtless, the French Government hoped to separate England from Austria. If so, it failed; for, from the outset, the Foreign Office declared that no separate negotiation would be undertaken. Further, its good faith appears in the elaborate measures at once adopted to assure the collaboration of the Allies. On December 22nd, Grenville wrote a “most secret” despatch to Eden at Vienna, setting forth the desirability of the two Courts at once exchanging views so that they and, if possible, all the Allies should arrive at an agreement before a negotiation began. A recent statement by the Directory set forth terms of peace which Grenville regarded as “extravagant and insulting”; but the internal difficulties of France seemed to promise a more reasonable programme. On her side, Great Britain now abandoned the fantastic notion of annexing the north-eastern fortresses of France to the Belgic Provinces. She proposed the restitution to Austria of those territories (with the addition of Liége and the southern parts of the United Provinces recently acquired by France); also, the recovery of Savoy by Sardinia (Nice was not mentioned), and the restoration of the Stadholderate. From the outset, the British Government utterly disclaimed the plan, which busybodies in Vienna had fathered on it, of making a separate peace.

Circumstances appearing to favour this project, Ministers, on January 30th, 1796, approved the draft of a despatch to Eden inviting the issue of a joint Declaration by the two Powers as to their readiness to discuss terms of peace. George III disapproved it, but informed Grenville that he would not offer “any obstinate resistance,” and hoped that the proposal would be rejected by France². Grenville was, also, doubtful as to its success; but he instructed Wickham to open the matter to Barthélemy at Berne, with a view to the assembling of a Congress. The overture was made in Switzerland, mainly in order to

¹ Guyot, pp. 146–9.

² *Dropmore Papers*, III. 169, 170.

allow of Austria and Sardinia readily cooperating if they desired. Pitt was more sanguine; and, considering the hopefulness of his nature, there is no reason to doubt his sincerity in the matter. Grenville wrote to Eden that the Declaration should be issued "for the double purpose either of securing advantageous terms of peace or of laying the foundation of a vigorous prosecution of the war¹."

Unfortunately, the British Government now held back the subsidies due to Vienna. Apparently, it deemed the defensive Austrian tactics, lately pursued with such fatal results, not worth the stipulated financial support, or else it believed in the speedy advent of peace. Nothing could have been more unfortunate. Austria was left without the sinews of war, just before the opening of Bonaparte's Italian campaign. On April 9th, Eden reported the utter inability of Austria "to provide even for the common expenses of the war"; and discontent on this head must have hindered cordial cooperation with regard to the peace proposals. Already, Thugut had thrown cold water on them, declaring that the Emperor, while declining to join in the Declaration, would, in due course, issue one of similar import. On March 5th, he harked back to the recently discarded notion of the Belgic-Bavarian Exchange—a proof that he was toying with that scheme which France had dangled before him. Eden expressed deep regret at the revival of this proposal, as to which the two Governments had so often been at variance².

Affairs at Turin were not more promising. Since the disasters of the year 1794, that Court had been a prey to constant fears, which found expression in tentative overtures for peace. Such at least was the first belief of Thugut and Grenville, the latter even for a time withholding the subsidy due to Sardinia, and thereby weakening her before the blows of Bonaparte fell upon her discouraged troops. The proposal of a joint Declaration of the Allies completed the dismay of the King and his advisers, who believed that the French Directory was bent on a ruthless prosecution of the War.

They were right. Aggressive aims were now uppermost at Paris, doubtless because the Directory detected further signs of collapse in the Coalition and felt confident of victory. In the month of January, 1796, when the British Government set on foot its scheme for a general pacification, Carnot accepted the plan of Bonaparte for the conquest of Italy. The final British note to Barthélemy, perhaps, erred

¹ *Wickham Corresp.* 1. 271-3. See too my article in *Eng. Hist. Rev.* April, 1903.

² F.O. Austria, 45. Eden to Grenville, March 2nd, 5th; April 9th, 1796.

on the side of firmness, and it omitted all reference to the French Republic¹. But the counterblast from Paris ended all hope of peace. As handed in at Berne on March 26th, it implied the retention by France of the "natural frontiers" (Rhine, Alps, Pyrenees and Ocean). The Belgic Provinces were not named among her acquisitions, because, by the Decree of October 1st, 1795, she had incorporated them². The French answer, moreover, involved the restitution of all the Colonial conquests of Great Britain during the War. These conditions put an end to the negotiation. They were announced in the days when Bonaparte was preparing to drive the Allies from the passes leading from Savona into the plain of North Italy. His conquest of that land was destined to postpone for eighteen years a favourable opportunity of effecting a durable peace.

III

Criticisms on Pitt's proposals for peace were twofold. The most fundamental were those of Burke, Windham and other Old Whigs who rallied to his side. Their devotion to the Royal cause led them to censure the whole conduct of the War as having been waged for material securities, when in reality it was—to use Burke's trenchant phrase—a war against "an armed opinion." Stamp out that pest, or it will infect, enfeeble and finally destroy you! Wage the war not for self-interest but for a principle! Distrust Prussia, Austria and other acquisitive States! Ally yourselves with the French Royalists against the murderous despotism now enthroned at Paris! Spurn all thought of compromise and peace as a cowardly betrayal of a sacred trust! Such is the burden of Burke's *Letters on a Regicide Peace* (1796-7). It formed the fighting creed of Windham, and ultimately had great influence on Grenville, while it echoed, in philosophic tones, the primitive predilections of George III.

Over against this clear-cut theory stood the contentions of Pitt—that, for Great Britain, the War did not arise out of a Royalist crusade (which was undeniably true), but from a resolve to gain "security" against French encroachments on a land fronting our exposed east coast; that treaty obligations and expediency alike bade us expel her from that land; that we had entered into a Coalition already virtually formed, and, from the weakness of our army, could only play a secondary part in military operations; that, therefore, we were inevitably drawn

¹ Guyot, pp. 153-5.

² Wickham (*Corresp.* i. 321), forgot that fact.

1796, he saw a politician named M. Nettement, who claimed to know that the Moderates in the French Directory secretly desired peace, which was certainly longed for by the great mass of the nation. If, therefore, so he assured Pitt's private secretary, Joseph Smith, an affable and tactful envoy were sent to Paris, who would interview the Directors privately and use his influence with the chiefs of parties, a reconciliation might well be reached; otherwise, the peace would be one of exhaustion¹. So dark was the outlook, especially in regard to finance, that Pitt resolved to seize this opportunity, and for a time induced Grenville to make the effort. By September 2nd, Ministers had drawn up a Minute embodying the terms to be offered to France through the medium of Denmark. These were: the cession to France of Savoy and Nice (she had acquired them by her recent Treaty with Sardinia); also, of "all the conquered countries on the Rhine not belonging to Austria"; she would regain her Colonies lost in the War, while Great Britain restored to Holland the conquered Dutch Colonies, except the Cape, Ceylon and Cochin. Austria was to recover the Belgic Provinces and other territories conquered by the French; but, in case they refused to give back the Belgic Provinces to Austria, and the latter insisted on the Belgic-Bavarian Exchange, we would not oppose it, provided that those Provinces were placed "in a situation of as little dependence as possible on France²."

Here were the outlines of a possible settlement. The chief objections to them were the considerable renunciations asked from France in the heyday of triumph, and the heavy losses to be imposed on the Dutch, in order that Austria might regain her pre-war position. The British Government, receding from its decision, of September 14th, 1794, not to sacrifice any of its colonial gains for the securing of better terms to Austria, now proposed to restore to the French our conquests overseas at their expense, also two or three small Colonies to the Dutch, in order to induce the French to evacuate Belgium, Lombardy and most of the Rhineland; but we retained the best of our acquisitions from the Dutch, who consequently would be the chief losers by the War. This shabby proposal was actually carried out, in part, at the Peace of Amiens, Spain, also, then figuring as a forced contributor to the expenses of the contest.

The proposals of September 2nd displeased George III, who deemed them undignified and untimely; but, in view of their almost

¹ *Beaufort MSS.* (Hist. MSS. Commission), pp. 369-71; Guyot, 273-6.

² *Dropmore Papers*, III. 239-42. As the Directory rejected the offer of the good offices of Denmark, the overtures were made direct to Paris.

certain rejection at Paris, he did not withhold his consent. Grenville also expected the Directory to find "a frivolous pretext for refusing a peace contrary to its interests"—so he wrote to Eden on September 7th—and he hoped the affair would merely serve to show who was guilty of the continuation of the War. He proceeded with the negotiation, but in a spirit different from that of Pitt. His despatch to Eden diverged somewhat from the proposals mentioned above. He (lately so insistent on an alliance with Prussia) now laid stress on maintaining the power of Austria, for which cause Great Britain would sacrifice many of her maritime gains, and he also insisted on the entire independence of the Belgic lands. Before sending Lord Malmesbury to Paris for the purpose of opening the negotiation, he reminded him that "the King is bound not to make peace without the consent of Austria, except on the terms of procuring for that Power the restitution of all it may have lost in the war¹." Thus Grenville stiffened the original proposals, which bore the mark of Pitt's more pacific nature.

Even so, their reception at Vienna was very cool. Fortune then favoured the Imperialists. In October they threw back the French to the Rhine and confidently expected to drive Bonaparte from Mantua. Further, Catharine, true to her policy of prolonging war in the west, offered 60,000 Russians for the next campaign on consideration of receiving a British subsidy, which she finally fixed at nearly £8,000,000. Thugut, before he was aware of this exorbitant demand, had conceived great hopes of Russia's help and disapproved the pacific overtures as likely to arouse her distrust². Thus Habsburg pride, reliance on Catharine, and the gleams of success in Germany disinclined that Court to thoughts of peace, even on the liberal terms outlined by Grenville. So stiff was Austria's attitude that, as will soon appear, he warned her of the fatal results likely to ensue.

The general situation in October, 1796, also offered but slight hopes of a settlement. True, the fortunes of France were for a time overcast. Nevertheless her diplomatic position was favourable, owing to the conclusion recently of Treaties with some secondary German States and Naples³. On the other hand, the Triple Alliance of September,

¹ *Dropmore Papers*, III. 260.

² F.O. Austria, 46. Grenville to Eden, September 20th; October 7th: Eden to Grenville, October 16th, 18th, 1796. For Thugut's confidence up to November 12th of military success see Vivenot, *Thugut, Clerfaiit und Wurmser*, pp. 511-518.

³ Naples gave up no territory and was not compelled to exclude British ships. The Directory hoped probably to facilitate a separate peace with Austria, since the Empress Maria Theresa was a daughter of Queen Maria Carolina, of the Two Sicilies. Guyot, pp. 205-7.

of Ireland; and it is significant that the date of his sailing from Brest (December 17th) coincided with the drawing up of a warlike note by Delacroix, in which he advised the rejection of the British proposals. Those proposals drawn up by Grenville on December 11th, were delivered to Delacroix after the news of the death of the Tsarina reached Paris. Since they included the retrocession of the Belgic Provinces to Austria and the evacuation of Italy by the French armies, with comparatively small colonial retrocessions by Great Britain, the Directory naturally termed them *ces conditions déshonorantes*, and, on December 19th, bade Malmesbury leave Paris within 48 hours. He believed this haughty conduct to result largely from the news of the death of the Empress¹.

Grenville's final proposals were, probably, designed to lead to a rupture. If so, he succeeded; for it came about in a manner calculated to throw the odium upon the Directory. But that Government could now afford to disregard the moderate or peace party in France. Its successes bade fair to overturn old Europe and extend French control to the Tiber and the Upper Danube. Moreover, the British Opposition hotly denied the good faith of Ministers in the late negotiation; but, in spite of a brilliant attack by Fox, Ministers carried the day against his amendment by 212 votes to 37 (December 30th, 1796)².

Thus ended this gloomy year. In European waters, the British Navy had achieved little of note; for the failure of Hoche's expedition to Ireland was due rather to a faulty start and bad weather than to the dispositions of Admirals Bridport and Colpoys. Nevertheless, in distant waters British seamen won several triumphs, securing from France St Lucia, Grenada and St Vincent; from the United Provinces Amboyna, Demerara, Berbice, together with Colombo and other Dutch settlements in Ceylon. On the other hand, our forces serving in Hayti suffered terrible losses from disease, which almost warranted the scathing censures of Windham on our West India policy.

In view of the growth of discouragement at home and of anti-British feelings in Austria, it is surprising that Grenville did not publicly explain the motives underlying British policy. Gouverneur Morris, a good friend to England, urged this course of action in a

¹ Malmesbury, *Diaries*, III. 339-65; C. Ballot, *Les Négociations de Lille* (1910), pp. 38-40.

² I doubt the story of the Prussian Ambassador, Sandoz-Rollin (in Baillet, *Preussen und Frankreich*, I. 106), that Malmesbury went to him on December 20th and accused Grenville of bad faith—a breach of confidence of which (to say the least) Malmesbury would surely not have been guilty—and to the envoy of Prussia! E. D. Adams (p. 50), seems to accept the story.

letter of October 5th, 1796, from Vienna, stating that Anglophobes were accusing her of protracting the miseries of Europe in order to complete the conquest of the two Indies. He admitted that Grenville had to appease home opinion by dilating on the value of our Colonial acquisitions; but such statements were utilised by hostile pressmen. until they embarrassed even the autocrats of Vienna. He, therefore, suggested that Grenville should issue a reasoned defence of his policy, to the effect that the security of the British possessions required the capture of the French and Dutch Colonies; but that this, though a legitimate war measure, was not the ultimate object of the War, which was to protect Germany and the Netherlands¹. This statesmanlike advice Grenville seems to have disregarded as an unheard-of departure from the traditions of diplomatic reserve endemic at Downing Street.

The ominous tightening of the financial situation, the arrival of serious news as to the daring outrages of the United Irishmen², and the popularity of Erskine's pamphlet, *A View of the Causes and Consequences of the present War with France* (January, 1797), concurred to arouse in Pitt once more the resolve to seize the first opportunity for a general pacification. His desire was strengthened by the course of the War. Though Jervis's brilliant victory over a greatly superior Spanish fleet (February 14th) had dealt a heavy blow at that navy, yet the general prospects were gloomy. As usual, Austria was a load about our neck. The surrender of Mantua (February 2nd) and the speedy collapse of her defence of the Carnic Alps portended a final disaster. Naturally enough, the attacks in Parliament on the Government's policy of subsidising Austria became more bitter. On April 4th, Sheridan's motion for an enquiry into this subject gained 87 votes, as compared with 37 for the anti-War motion of December 30th. The numbers would have trebled, if members could have read the reports then being penned by Eden and Colonel Graham at Vienna as to the refusal of Austrian officers and soldiers to fight and the utter confusion at headquarters. The Emperor, it is true, had repelled suggestions for a peace made by General Clarke through the Grand-duke of Tuscany, and Thugut was struggling manfully against a surrender. But they both complained that we were compromising the campaign by withholding adequate pecuniary support and naval assistance in the Adriatic. Thugut demanded a large subsidy and the despatch of Jervis's fleet (then observing Cadiz) to operate on the Venetian coast. The British Government

¹ *Dropmore Papers*, III. 258; Sparks, *Life of G. Morris*, III. 93.

² Lecky, VII. ch. XXVIII.

declined both requests, but on April 4th decided to send a force of frigates and light craft to that quarter¹.

On the same day, Grenville signed a despatch to Eden, affirming the willingness of Great Britain to treat for peace conjointly with Austria. He again suggested the issue of a joint Declaration stating their wishes for a combined negotiation. If France agrees, then Austria may propose the locality, provided it be not too far from London. Great Britain will sacrifice certain of her Colonial conquests in order to assure the welfare and security of her Ally, "on which His Majesty holds that of Europe essentially to depend²." These proposals were prompted, not only by Austria's defeats, but also by news which reached London on March 30th from Lord Elgin, British Ambassador at Berlin, as to the Secret Treaty of that Court with France on August 5th, 1796³. Grenville, true to his earlier conviction of the value of a Prussian Alliance, had decided to make one more bid for it. Now, it seemed hopeless; and the need of peace was the more urgent. On April 9th the Cabinet decided to send Hammond to Vienna to arrange a joint negotiation to that end. George III deemed the measure big with evils, but did not actively oppose. He could scarcely do so, in view of Pitt's statement that the Cabinet was unanimous. The following words in his letter of April 9th to the King are noteworthy: "In this opinion he knows that none concur more decidedly than those of Your Majesty's servants who have been most anxious to resist, while they thought it possible, the sacrifices now proposed." Grenville's letter to the King of the same date is equally decisive⁴.

The Instructions of April 11th, 1797, to Eden, taken by Hammond, were drawn up with the special purpose of safeguarding Habsburg interests. They aimed at securing a general armistice, so as to allow time for consultation with Vienna and Petrograd, but set forth alternatives in case Austria needed to act at once. If so, Eden and Hammond might advise the cession of the Belgic Provinces, provided that she acquired indemnities in either Germany or Italy sufficient for the maintenance of her position as a Great Power. On other topics, Grenville

¹ F.O. Austria, 48. Eden to Grenville, March 8th, 22nd, 25th, 1797. For Thugut's opposition to the French offers of peace sent through General Clarke and with the recommendation of the Grand-duke of Tuscany see *Appendix D*, also Hüffer, *Quellen*, Pt II, vol. 1. pp. 112 *et seq.* Sorel, III. chap. iv.

² *Ibid.* Grenville to Eden, April 4, 1797.

³ *Dropmore Papers*, III. 304.

⁴ Stanhope, *Pitt*, III. App. p. v. *Dropmore Papers*, III. 310. But see Windham's account (*Diary*, p. 357) of George III's remark to him: "I honour you for your firmness" (probably in opposing the peace proposals).

proposed as a general basis the *status quo ante*, the French recovering all their former Colonies except Martinique: or, if we gave up that island, we claimed, in lieu of it, Trinidad and either Tobago or St Lucia. Similarly, we would restore to the Dutch their Colonies taken in the War, except the Cape and Ceylon, deemed essential to the protection of our East Indies. No British possessions having been lost, we offered these restitutions, in order to assure satisfactory terms to Austria and Portugal¹. The arrival of news of further defeats of Austria, probably also of the outbreak of the mutiny at Spithead, decided Grenville, by April 18th, to name conditionally further concessions, viz. that, if it were necessary to save her from complete disaster, His Majesty would forego all his recent conquests in the West Indies, except Tobago, where British commercial interests were supreme.

These despatches and others printed in the *Appendix* vindicate the good faith of the Cabinet in regard to this overture. George III disapproved of it; but he had long ago regarded persistence (not to say obstinacy) as the foremost of the political virtues. Statesmen who viewed the whole situation with an open mind must have deemed peace essential. Great Britain, though severely strained by recent events, held strong ground. She could fight on alone, unencumbered by Allies; but at present she was bound to do her best for them. On their behalf, she now prepared to rescind her earlier decision not to surrender her colonial acquisitions, in order to alleviate their peace conditions. Of what use, indeed, was it to continue a conflict in which Austria's military disasters continually cancelled the effects of British naval triumphs? The statesmen of London and Paris must already have seen that affairs were approaching a deadlock. The French fought desperately to secure the "natural frontiers" as a safeguard against Austria and England; while those Powers struggled on from a conviction that the new frontiers would place France in a position of dangerous preponderance. In the process, Austria was losing Northern Italy and her possessions in Suabia and the Rhineland. Great Britain was pouring forth subsidies and making conquests overseas, whose chief use was to serve as barter at some ever receding pacification. The result would be either the destruction, or some artificial reconstruction, of the old Flemish Barrier. If so, as in the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle (1748), the British navy would have served merely to redress the Balance of Power on the Continent. As Burke truly said respecting the horrible loss of life in our West India campaigns: "If we look for matter of exchange in order to ransom

¹ See *Appendix D*.

Europe, it is easy to show that we have taken a terribly roundabout road¹."

Grenville feared that the British proposal might arrive too late; and therefore sent after Hammond another, to the effect that, if Austria had made peace, he was to proceed to Berlin and accept an earlier, and rather suspicious, offer of that Court to mediate for peace². On arriving at Vienna at the end of April he found that Bonaparte had imposed on that Court the Preliminaries of Leoben (April 18th). Thugut maintained the utmost reserve and concealed them from him. Hammond, therefore, said nothing about the projected overture at Berlin³, which was certain to annoy Thugut. Proceeding to Berlin, he acted warily, and again fulfilled Grenville's revised intention, which was that he should state merely Britain's readiness to enter into pacific negotiations, saying nothing meanwhile as to our actual relations to Austria. By this cautious reserve, Grenville and Hammond rendered possible a resumption of close relations with Austria. The wonder is that, after reiterated proofs of the bad faith of Prussia, Grenville should, even in the present desperate straits, have thought of seeking her mediation.

Starhemberg, who believed that Hammond had unguardedly disclosed the secrets at Vienna, reproached Grenville and expressed the hope that Great Britain would never cease to trust Austria and Russia, united as they were by friendly ties. But the mischief of the situation was that we were drifting apart from Austria, who answered our invitation to a joint negotiation with excuses and reserve, or by complete silence. Further, it was clear that neither did she wholly trust the Tsar Paul, nor he her. Grenville had contemplated an application even to that unaccountable potentate for his good offices; but the mere intention illustrates the British statesman's desperation⁴. It would be unfair to blame Francis II and Thugut overmuch for the collapse of 1797, in view of the utter demoralisation of the Austrian army, the craven spirit of nobles and burghers, and the delays in our financial succour⁵. But it soon transpired that the Habsburg Court was contemplating an alluring alternative—an entente with France with a view to the partition of the Venetian Republic⁶. Herein lay the chief reason

¹ Burke, *Letters on a Regicide Peace* (No. II).

² *Dropmore Papers*, III. 298.

³ So he declared (*Dropmore Papers*, III. 322) Starhemberg heard the contrary (*Ibid.* p. 325); he thought the secrecy of his Court culpable.

⁴ *Ibid.* III. pp. 299, 312; Ballot, chap. IV. Vorontzoff at London was working for a rapprochement with England; but the inconstancy of Paul made it very difficult.

⁵ Hüffer, *Quellen*, Pt II, vol. I. pp. clv, 178-184.

⁶ See *Appendix D*; also, Hüffer, *Quellen*, Pt II, vol. I. p. 153.

for the secretiveness of its policy during the spring and summer of 1797. Frequently did Grenville and Eden ask for the communication of the Austro-French terms signed at Leoben. Thugut kept them jealously secret. He, also, refused to ratify a convention for the repayment of sums lent by Great Britain to Austria; and, in spite of reiterated protests from the British Government that such conduct sapped all confidence in Austria's integrity, he took no steps to satisfy these just claims, believing probably that her isolation and need of an Ally would lead to the cancelling of the debt. Sharp opposition in Parliament compelled the Pitt Administration to hold firm in this matter, the result being a marked divergence between British and Austrian policy. Thus, the hope of setting on foot joint negotiations for peace came to naught.

In fact, the Triple Alliance of 1795 was defunct. Paul pirouetted apart; Francis II was drifting towards a tame but not unprofitable surrender; and Great Britain, hard pressed by the mutinies in the fleets at Spithead and the Nore, seemed for a time at the mercy of the French. The cheery pessimism of George Canning found expression in the following lines (May 12th, 1797):

Come, Windham! celebrate with me
This day of joy and jubilee,
This day of *no* disaster.
Our Government is *not* o'erturned—
Huzza! Our fleet has *not* been burned,
Our army's *not* the master¹.

The intensity of Pitt's desire for peace is at no time more evident than his venturing, even in the midst of these civil discords, to sound the disposition of the French Directory on this question. On June 4th he privately assured Lord Carlisle that overtures were being made at Paris². To take such steps while the Nore mutineers were blockading the Thames and Consols were down to 48, was the most questionable proceeding in Pitt's career; and it was, almost certainly, disapproved by Grenville. On May 26th he ordered Hammond to leave Berlin, where nothing could be effected, and on June 2nd he informed Eden that we were making peace overtures at Paris in consequence of Austria having come to terms with the French and observing complete silence on those terms; but he ordered Eden merely to state these facts as a proof of our desire still to remain in concert with her. As to the method

¹ *Windham Papers*, II. 53.

² See *Appendix D*, also, for the reasons why Grenville refused Austria's futile, because belated, proposal of a General Congress.

of our negotiations with the Directory, there arose a sharp division in Downing Street. Grenville, Portland, Spencer and Windham still desired close cooperation with our Allies, Austria and Portugal. Pitt, Loughborough, Dundas, Chatham, Cornwallis and, finally, Liverpool, carried the day in favour of a limited negotiation¹. George III, very reluctantly, concurred. Grenville, however, in his note of June 17th to Delacroix, declared that Great Britain must look after the interests of her Ally, Portugal, and that those of Spain and Holland might be considered on the representation of France.

We can here consider merely the causes of the failure of the ensuing negotiation at Lille. Malmesbury, our Plenipotentiary, well summarised the influences at work in the concluding sentence of his letter of July 25th to Grenville: "The fate of the negotiation will depend much less on what passes in our conferences here than on what may shortly happen at Paris." This remarkable forecast was prompted by the critical state of affairs at Paris. There, the violent trio that controlled the Directory procured the dismissal of Delacroix and other Ministers, the Foreign Minister's place being taken by Talleyrand as Plenipotentiary at Lille. Not that this diplomat was, either by nature or conviction, a Jacobin; but, since at this juncture his diplomatic talents would be invaluable, he became their man for a time. In his opinion, the British Government was secretly encouraging Austria to resist the French terms, or rather the terms which Bonaparte was thrusting on her. "Force the Austrian peace by hurrying on the British peace"—such was his motto. If left to himself, the young conqueror would probably have humoured the islanders to some extent, in order to crush Austria. That Power was playing a dangerous game. Obstinate, she held her British Ally at arm's length, until Grenville declared that her suspicious reserve and belated proposals for a General Congress left the Court of St James's free to go its own way, cooperation with her being out of the question, unless Gallic haughtiness compelled both States to fight on to the death. Malmesbury, also, affirmed that we had done more than our duty by her, while she forgot what she owed to us². As for Portugal, her Envoy complicated matters on August 10th by hurriedly signing a Separate Peace, which his own Government promptly disavowed.

Thus, in the month of September, the Directory seemed to have

¹ *Life of Sir G. Elliot*, II. 408. Windham, *Diary*, pp. 365-8. For Burke's last despairing letter on public affairs, see *The Windham Papers* (1913), vol. II. pp. 53-6. For the British peace proposals of July 8th, 1797, see Ballot, *lpp.* xiv.

² *Malmesbury Diaries*, III. 465.

the ball at its feet. Recent events had puffed up its leading members with intolerable pride. They hoped to arouse a great revolt in Ireland, stir up panic in England by invasions and plots of malcontents, and group the Baltic States in a new Armed Neutrality against her. The Tsar Paul, being inclined towards peace, they hoped to refashion the Armed Neutrality of 1780, and to overwhelm both Great Britain and Austria. Their forceful policy having succeeded in the domestic crisis, the *coup d'état* of 18th Fructidor (September 4th, 1797), which led to the triumph of the violent trio and the exile of their moderate opponents the victorious faction was about to apply similar methods to their foes abroad. Reubell, the most energetic of the three, hated England virulently and believed that she could be revolutionised and ruined¹. A week later, Talleyrand and Maret were replaced by Treilhard and Bonnier, Talleyrand becoming Foreign Minister. On September 16th, they sent a note, asking Malmesbury whether he had full powers to agree to a complete restitution of all British conquests made from France or her Allies; failing which, he should leave Lille within twenty-four hours. This brusque demand involved the restitution to the Dutch, not only of their settlements in Ceylon (as to which Pitt and Maret were ready for a compromise), but also of the Cape, as to which no British statesman would give way². On other questions, an agreement had been virtually reached during informal discussions between Malmesbury and Maret; but this sudden demand was equivalent to a rupture. In vain did the French Plenipotentiaries declare that it was designed *pour activer la négociation*, and that, if Malmesbury chose to depart, they would await his return. That device was a sop to public opinion in France, which had longed for peace. With more reason, the British Government could urge that France had broken off the negotiation by a sudden and imperious demand. Accordingly, the whole affair tended to accentuate the war spirit on both sides of the Channel.

It is, however, doubtful whether a compromise was practicable. The French Plenipotentiaries might, in private, deride the lofty claims of their Spanish Allies for the recovery of Gibraltar and Nootka Sound, the demand of territory in Newfoundland for their fisheries and of a virtually exclusive possession of the Pacific coasts of America. But, after the revival of Spanish pride consequent on Nelson's repulse at

¹ Ballot, chap. xviii.

² *Malmesbury Diaries*, III. 385, 400, 456, 471, 557. Pitt and Grenville differed respecting Ceylon.

Teneriffe, the Directory could not entirely overlook the claims of its chief Ally, nor indeed those of the Dutch, who, while less pretentious, were far more persistent. Maret believed that if Great Britain would forego Ceylon, she might retain the Cape by bribing each Director to the extent of £50,000¹. On the score of character the suggestion is quite credible; but on that of expediency it is more than questionable. For such a proceeding could not remain secret; and its disclosure would damn for ever the men who resorted to it at the expense of a faithful Ally. There was, apparently, some chance of the Dutch accepting a substantial sum from England for the Cape, in order to discharge their pecuniary obligations to France, that Colony being then regarded as financially burdensome and useful only as the outpost guarding the East Indies². But the spirit prevalent at Paris after Fructidor forbade any chaffering on this head. Probably, Bonaparte's influence prevented the cession of the Cape to "the intriguing and enterprising islanders" who alone stood between him and the conquest of the East. Ostensibly, the question of the Cape was the chief crux at Lille, Ceylon and Trinidad presenting fewer difficulties. But, in reality, it was the domineering spirit of the Directors which occasioned the rupture³. Could they have foreseen the events of the next nine months—the Dutch navy crushed by Duncan at Camperdown (October 12th), the revival of British finance and prestige, the miserable failure of French plans for Ireland, the hatred aroused by the French invaders of Switzerland and Rome, and the rapid rise of Bonaparte at the expense of "the lawyers of the Directory," they would have made peace and have figured as the benefactors of Europe, not as the dupes of the Great Corsican.

In view of the evidence now in our possession, the charge that Grenville always desired the breakdown of the negotiation at Lille must be revised. He felt the need of peace, if it could be obtained on terms neither dishonourable nor too disadvantageous⁴. But, clearly, Pitt was more eager than he for a settlement. His desire to end the War appeared in his entertaining some vaguely alluring offer to restore peace on not unfavourable terms, if £2,000,000 were secretly paid to the five Directors. The offer was either a hoax or an attempt to manipulate the Stock Exchange; and Pitt's dallying with so suspicious

¹ Ballot, p. 237.

² *Malmesbury Diaries*, III. 439, 454, 464, 470.

³ Ballot, pp. 474-6, 298-309.

⁴ See *Appendix D*; also *Dropmore Papers*, III. 372, 378; Häfner, *Quellen*, Pt II, vol. I. p. cxx note.

a proposal seems to have induced Windham to write the sarcastic letter of October 10th, referring to the constant lowering of our terms, in the hope of some day finding at Paris a Government that would grant conditions of peace "not utterly destructive"; for to that course Pitt's system of "tiding over" was rapidly reducing us¹. The prestige and credit of Great Britain never sank lower than in the summer of 1797. Thenceforth, under the pressure of French pretensions she began to recover spirit and energy.

In every respect, the *coup d'état* of Fructidor marks the beginning of a new period. In France, it brought about a recrudescence of Jacobinical violence. The rupture at Lille also opened the period of definitely offensive war. Both events were decided largely by the forceful will of Bonaparte, which, with military help, overbore the Moderates and launched France on a career of conquest and plunder. An attempt has been made by Sorel to prove the essential unity of all the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars; but that theory is at variance with certain plain facts. Before Fructidor and Lille, the military efforts of Frenchmen had been to a large extent directed to the acquisition of what they deemed secure boundaries. Afterwards, they aimed at foreign conquests. There is a wide difference between the campaigns of Carnot and those of Bonaparte. The former was now an exile, the latter was now the uncrowned king of the French. Up to September, 1797, the hopes of democrats everywhere centred in France. Thenceforth, they turned against her. That month marks the turning point both in the French Revolution and in European History. Brumaire and the Empire were but the natural sequel of Fructidor.

That event also led the Directory and Bonaparte to conclude peace promptly with Austria. "We have war with England (wrote Bonaparte on October 18th), that enemy is formidable enough." Fearing that she was about to frame a new Coalition, he bullied Cobenzl into a surrender of the chief outstanding Austrian demand, the Ionian Isles, then forming part of the Venetian Republic, which the two disputants had resolved to partition. By the resulting Treaty, signed at Campo Formio near Udine on October 17th, 1797, France acquired the Venetian fleet, and for her subordinate Cisalpine Republic the western districts of the Venetian mainland, while Austria obtained the city of Venice, Eastern Venetia, Istria and Dalmatia. She also ceded to the French the Belgic Provinces, recognised the (nominal) independence of the lands now forming the Cisalpine Republic, promised to transfer

¹ *Windham Papers*, II. 61.

experience of the dealings of France with her neighbours. On January 11th, 1798, George III wrote to Pitt, urging the need of an alliance with Austria, Russia and Prussia, and the despatch of Lord Minto to Vienna for the initial negotiations, England acting as a guarantor for an eventual Austro-Prussian settlement. No such steps, however, were taken for the present, but de Luc, George III's agent in Germany, worked hard to safeguard the Princes of the Holy Roman Empire and remove the obstacles to a union of the Powers. For the present, the scramble for "indemnities" at Rastatt left Central Europe a prey to French intrigues; and, by a vote of the Congress on March 9th, 1798, France secured the Rhine boundary, the ecclesiastical domains further east being earmarked for the dispossessed German Princes from beyond that river¹.

These and other high-handed actions on the part of the French induced Thugut to angle warily for support from London; but, on the score of Austria's poverty, he declined to repay her loan of £1,600,000, now overdue at London. Pitt and Grenville insisting on the discharge of this obligation, a diplomatic deadlock ensued, destined to produce serious consequences. True, on April 1st Starhemberg proffered to Grenville proposals, drawn up by Thugut on March 18th, probably owing to the French diplomatic success of March 9th at Rastatt. They aimed at the formation of a league between the four great monarchies in order to oppose France, now "decidedly bent on the subversion of every part of Europe and totally regardless of the faith of treaties." Austria, also, asked for pecuniary aid, the despatch of a British fleet into the Mediterranean, and enquired whether, if necessary, action could be taken in the year 1799. Starhemberg, further, hopefully suggested that the one thing necessary to make the Tsar act was to convince him that peace with anarchic France was impossible, and that, if Prussia were unfriendly, he should at least neutralise her. At best, however, a Quadruple Alliance could be formed with which the Scandinavian and Italian States would probably coalesce. He, also, opposed the notion of the Belgic Provinces ever falling to Prussia, but in any case begged for British financial support². Here he encountered the fixed resolve of Pitt and Grenville, which barred further progress. For a brief space, the question of reparation for an insult to the French flag at Vienna on April 13th promised to lead to a rupture; but the

¹ Rose, *Pitt and Napoleon: Essays and Letters*, pp. 249, 243; *Dropmore Papers*, III. 400-7, IV. 43-60; Guyot, pp. 673-684; *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, I. pp. 1-256; II. Hüffer, *Der Rastatter Kongress*, vol. II. *passim*.

² *Dropmore Papers*, IV. 153-9.

incident ended in a tame compromise which for a time seemed likely to lead even to an Austro-French entente. The Directory sought to entice both Austria and Russia to a partition of the Turkish Empire, but met with little response. Prussia, likewise, rejected its overtures for an alliance.

In the early summer of 1798, the impasse in European affairs seemed hopeless. Great Britain was for a time distracted by the formidable revolt in Ireland, which the fleets of Brest and Rochefort promised, but failed, to foster. Italy and Switzerland lay at the feet of the French; and the helplessness of the Holy Roman Empire stands revealed in the remark of Bonaparte, that, if that institution did not exist, France would have to create it. But now, as was so often to happen, his masterful ambition launched France into an ocean of adventure, overburdening her with new responsibilities and exasperating all the Powers. Instead of striking at Ireland, where the blow would have been mortal, he purposed to ruin Great Britain by the seizure of Malta and Egypt, as a preliminary to the acquisition of her Indian Empire. Setting sail from Toulon on May 19th, his great armada easily captured Malta (June 12th). The news aroused a profound sensation at Rastatt. "It caused, first stupor" (wrote Debry, the French plenipotentiary on August 6th), "then rage. Not for a week has a single friend of Austria come to my house¹." Bonaparte's capture of Alexandria produced an equal sensation. It threw light on the French projects for a partition of Turkey, and spurred on that Power to a declaration of war. On August 15th, the Sultan appealed to the Emperor of Morocco and other Moslem Princes for a joint effort against the French, who had without "any declaration of war, as practised by all regular governments, sent a wretch named Bonaparte against Egypt with a view to an attack on the whole Mohammedan world." Though the Sultan failed to stir up a Jihad against France, he found an unexpected Ally in Russia. The seizure of Malta, for whose Knights the Tsar Paul had long cherished a romantic admiration, threw him into transports of rage and ended his hesitations as to a war with France. His zeal for the expulsion of the French from Malta increased, when many of the exiled Knights repaired to Russia and, in October, 1798, elected him Grand-master of their Order. At once, he prepared to help Turkey with a fleet, and Austria with troops subsidised by Great Britain. The news of Nelson's victory at the Nile (which did not reach Paris until September 14th, and London on

¹ *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 1. 270.

British fleet to that sea, within which there was no British station, she was bound to succour the Neapolitans in case of a French attack, consequent on their supplying the needed provisions and water; and the aggressiveness of the French (witness their forcible occupation of Turin on July 3rd) warranted the belief that they would attack Naples on the first plausible pretext. In this respect, then, the despatch of Nelson's squadron to the Mediterranean, primarily for the protection of Naples, was almost certain to lead to a new war; and Thugut's assurances to Eden, especially on June 23rd, pointed to the proffer of prompt assistance to that State, if it were assailed in pursuance of actions necessarily resulting from Austria's demand.

Nevertheless, so dependent was she on the Tsar (himself a waving reed) that, on October 3rd, Grenville warned Hamilton as to the danger of Naples breaking with the French Republic, unless it had "the fullest assurances of support from the Court of Vienna." By some mischance, this despatch did not reach Hamilton until November 19th; and, two days earlier, King Ferdinand had rushed into war. Whether he counted on armed help from Austria is doubtful. On September 28th General Acton assured Nelson and Hamilton that "Naples was determined to declare war, not wait for the Emperor; that they well knew the plan of the French against them." His rival, the Marchese di Gallo, inculcated caution and therefore incurred the hot displeasure of Nelson. Succumbing to the fascination of Lady Hamilton (herself the favourite of Queen Maria Carolina) the Admiral urged instant war. When admitted to their councils he roundly scolded Gallo and strengthened the party of action. The arrival of the Austrian General Mack, and his belief in the soldierly qualities of the 30,000 Neapolitan troops who made a fine show at Caserta, clinched the matter. On November 12th, Nelson assisted at a council at which it was decided that he should carry 4600 men to Leghorn, to menace the French rear, and, on the 17th Mack advanced to attack them at Rome, "trusting to the support of the Emperor." The latter plan must, however, have been formed during the absence of Nelson off Valetta (October 24th-31st); for, so early as November 10th, news from Naples reached Thugut to the effect that the kingdom was about to make war; and, on behalf of the Emperor, he angrily declared to Eden that if it acted thus, it would receive no help from Austria. He had sent a similar warning to Naples, which arrived late on the 12th, five days before the Neapolitans were to advance; but the King and Queen, stimulated thereto by Nelson, nevertheless resolved to attack. Evidently, the Admiral

had jumped to the conclusion that the Emperor would act, or must be forced to act¹.

The result was disastrous. The Neapolitans broke at every encounter, rushed back in rout to the capital; and, on December 23rd, Nelson in H.M.S. *Vanguard* carried the royal family and the Hamiltons for safety to Palermo. This ignominious collapse exasperated the Emperor; and on December 22nd he hotly asserted to Eden that the precipitate action of his father-in-law, King Ferdinand, in attacking France was due to the British Government, which had sought to drag Austria into war, though it knew her to be unprepared. The charge against the Government is demonstrably false; if it had been levelled at Nelson, it would have contained some measure of truth. In any case, the precipitate action of Ferdinand marred the opening of the War of the Second Coalition and deprived that struggle both of the momentum and the general goodwill which might have assured the overthrow of France. Never was she weaker and more hated; never were her opponents stronger than after the Battle of the Nile; and it is a matter of enduring regret that the rashness of Nelson at Naples compromised the political results of that glorious triumph.

Meanwhile, the whims of Paul, the narrow suspicions of Francis, and the conscientious objections of Frederick William to any forward move, let slip the opportunity. While France was arming systematically in pursuance of her new Law of Conscription (September 23rd, 1798), the three Powers were engaged in futile chaffering. In order to bring the Tsar to a point, Grenville on November 16th despatched to Whitworth proposals for an Anglo-Russian Alliance which should form the basis of a European League. Taking warning from the fate of the First Coalition, he sought to effect a just and stable settlement of Continental problems by means of a firm compact between the two Great Powers that were but slightly concerned in the central tangles. Great Britain and Russia were to lay the foundations of a Quadruple Alliance with Austria and Prussia for the master-aim of reducing France within her ancient limits, the Allies contracting not to lay down their arms until this purpose should be attained. Since, however, its attainment might be hindered by the territorial ambitions and mutual jealousies of the Central Powers, Grenville sought to exorcise them by a preliminary understanding, the Habsburgs being invited to look towards Italy, in order not to exasperate Prussia. Her monarch was to be

¹ Sir H. Nicolas, *Despatches of Nelson*, II. 144, 148, 170, 171. See also *Appendix E*.

invited to indicate his desires for territory—a request not calculated to placate Vienna. For the rest, Grenville assumed that neither of the Central Powers would desire the Belgic lands, and that the best plan was, therefore, to add them to the United Netherlands under the restored Stadholder, the Prince of Orange. The freedom of Switzerland and the restitution by the French of Savoy (Nice was not named) and of the Rhenish lands to their former owners were, also, stipulated¹.

Viewed at large, the document may be called a rough draft of the Treaties of Vienna and Paris of 1814–15; while the almost nervous bid for Prussia's aid for the deliverance of the Netherlands associates this programme with the Anglo-Dutch-Prussian Alliance of 1788. At several points, the outlines are shadowy, notably as relating to the expansion of Prussia and the future of the kingdom of Sardinia. The latter State is not named, doubtless because it had on April 4th, 1797, framed a close Alliance with the French², and was now under their control. Nevertheless, the future of Sardinia should have been as much a matter of concern as that of the Dutch Republic, which was equally in the hands of the enemy.

Grenville's Instructions of November 16th led to the formation of the provisional Anglo-Russian Treaty of December 29th, 1798, which stipulated pecuniary support by Great Britain for a subsidised Russian army of 45,000 men, to act in the west together with a Prussian force. At this time, Grenville cherished high hopes of inducing Prussia to take up arms for the liberation of the United Provinces. Cooperation with her almost necessarily involved alienation from Austria. Accordingly, as the Court of Vienna maintained its suspicious reserve, he sharply rebuked Whitworth for allowing himself, at the instance of Paul and in contradiction to Instructions from home, to be drawn into futile *pourparlers* with that inveterate schemer, Count Lewis Cobenzl³. These were cut short, and Grenville despatched his brother Thomas on a special mission to Berlin, for the purpose of arranging an Anglo-Prusso-Russian invasion of Dutch territory, if possible with the help of Denmark or Sweden. The family connexion of Frederick William with the House of Orange, and his known desire for the liberation of that land, told in favour of the scheme; but, finally, Francophil influences, added to his innate indecision of character, prevailed. He decided to stand aloof, but considered that his profession of benevolent

¹ *Dropmore Papers*, IV. 377–380.

² Sorel, v. 154. On December 9th, 1798, Charles Emmanuel IV abdicated and retired to the island of Sardinia.

³ F.O. Russia, 42, Grenville to Whitworth, January 25th, 1799.

intentions warranted the payment of a British subsidy. Haugwitz, then posing as Anglophil, early in May started a scheme for putting 60,000 Prussians at our disposal on good financial terms; but this proposal, whether sincere or not, was shelved by Frederick William near the end of July, when the adoption of any other extensive plan of operations was almost impracticable¹. Accordingly, the British programme of a great Coalition with Russia and Prussia (Austria, Naples and the Scandinavian States being accessories) fell through. Nothing, therefore, remained but hastily to adopt more limited schemes for the remainder of 1799—a fact which goes far to explain the very unsatisfactory operations of that year². To these, so far as they resulted from British initiative, we must now turn.

For reasons already stated, no compact was possible with Austria. But the provisional Anglo-Russian Treaty of December 29th, 1798, was prolonged by a Convention of six months later. Compacts of the two Powers with Naples and Turkey added to the scope, though not to the strength, of the Second Coalition. Meanwhile, an Austro-Russian Alliance had led to the despatch of Suvóroff's army (finally about 60,000 strong) with a view to assistance against the French in northern Italy; but disputes between the two Courts delayed, first its departure, then its progress, and not until the end of March, 1799, did that doughty warrior and his vanguard enter Vienna. At once, disputes broke out with the *Hofkriegsrath*, which regarded him as an Austrian Marshal entirely under its control. That any success was ever gained under this insensate arrangement is a supreme tribute to his genius. Scarcely more promising were the Anglo-Russian plans for the campaign. Not until the end of April, 1799, on receipt of the British ratification of the December Treaty, did the Tsar issue orders for the westward march of the subsidised Russian army under Korsakoff—a delay which hindered the successful opening of the campaign on the Upper Rhine. It soon transpired that the effective strength of this force was far below what Great Britain was paying for. Disputes also arose with Austria as to the objective of this army, she pointing to the Palatinate, while we desired the liberation of Switzerland as a preliminary to an Austro-Russian invasion of Franche-Comté. Finally, the British alternative prevailed.

¹ *Dropmore Papers*, IV. 464, 479, 492, 514, 519-527; V. 3-8, 14, 46, 68, 195-9. *Wickham Corresp.* II. 86.

² H. Hüffer, *Der Krieg des Jahres 1799 und die zweite Koalition* (2 vols. Gotha, 1904), has missed this important consideration.

With the Court of Vienna a close understanding was impossible, owing to the mystery in which Francis II and Thugut shrouded all their proceedings. Eden surmised that they were considering attractive offers from France; and his suspicion was correct. This obscure situation was cleared up by the action of the Directory, which, in March, 1799, issued what amounted to a declaration of war against Austria. Seeing that France then had only 235,000 troops ready for action, her aggressiveness can be explained only by the conviction of her Envoys as to the weakness of the new Coalition. The long-drawn-out farce of the Rastatt Congress now ended in tragedy, when Szekler Hussars assassinated two of the French Plenipotentiaries. Such was the opening, chaotic and barbaric, of the War of the Second Coalition.

Thenceforth, British policy was directed chiefly towards the following objects—the healing of Austro-Russian discords, with a view to a joint invasion of Franche-Comté, the expulsion of the French from Dutch territory, the strengthening of our position in the Mediterranean and the East as a retort to Bonaparte's oriental efforts, and the breaking-up of the Armed Neutrality League. It will be well to treat these topics in the order here indicated.

The triumphs of the Russian and Austrian armies in Italy, under Suvóroff and Melas respectively, soon brought to a head the discords of those Governments. Apart from military disputes, a question of high policy soon sundered the two Courts. On the recapture of Turin from the French (May 20th, 1799), Paul, the self-styled champion of divine right and legitimacy, ordered the reinstatement of the King of Sardinia at his capital. This behest Francis II countermanded¹; and the diplomatic efforts of Great Britain and Russia at Vienna elicited proofs that he looked to the kingdom of Sardinia as one of his indemnities. Anxious, now that northern Italy was conquered, to be rid of Suvóroff, the Emperor concurred in a British proposal for the transfer of that army to Switzerland, and a joint invasion of Franche-Comté. To humour the Tsar, Grenville first made the proposal at Petrograd; when Paul agreed, Francis II expressed his assent, and forwarded corresponding instructions to Suvóroff. The veteran, who was planning an incursion into Nice, received the news with astonishment and indignation. To force the St Gothard in face of the French defence, to find subsistence in the Central Cantons, already impoverished by strife, and to join Korsakoff near Zurich signified a succession of problems never contemplated by the civilians who drew up the scheme.

¹ R. Gachot, *Suvóroff en Italie*, p. 192; Hüffer, pp. 55 *et seq.*

In fact, the whole story forms an instructive commentary on paper strategy and Coalition campaigns.

In order to pave the way for the liberation of Switzerland, Grenville had despatched Wickham (latterly in close relations with General Pichegru and other French Royalists) to stir up the Swiss, to concert a rising of the malcontents of eastern France, and so far as possible to cooperate with the Russian and Austrian commanders in Switzerland. Arriving at Schaffhausen late in June, Wickham found that the Austrian Government discountenanced the diversion of the Archduke Charles's army into Switzerland, and that he felt unable either to attack the French or to restore the Cantonal system which the majority of the inhabitants desired. It soon appeared that nothing would induce Thugut to act promptly in that quarter¹; and he alone had influence with the Emperor. In truth, the early successes in Germany and Italy, and the absence of Bonaparte and his army in the East, had conduced at Vienna to a mood of boundless confidence; and, since Great Britain supplied no money and much advice, she counted for nothing.

Yet the importance of her influence ought not to have been ignored. It alone had imparted some consistence to the First Coalition, and was now needed as much as ever. Her squadrons in the Mediterranean not only cut off Bonaparte, but prevented a large Franco-Spanish fleet under Bruix (which entered that sea in May, 1799) from achieving more than the revictualling of the French garrison besieged in Genoa. That single incident should have opened the eyes of Francis II. But they were blind, save to the near and the obvious. Concentrating his efforts on Italy and the Rhineland, he refused to push on with the British plan, which, if properly backed, might have produced great results. The secretiveness of Austrian policy exasperated Grenville. Deeming Eden somewhat slack in his duties and too subservient to the masterful Minister, he recalled him in June, substituting for him Lord Minto (formerly Sir Gilbert Elliot)². But the change was of little avail. On July 16th, Grenville wrote that Thugut, regarding the conquest of Italy as complete, seemed bent on thwarting his friends or Allies, and did so as thoroughly as if he were paid by France³. This was no exaggeration. The uncertainty as to the schemes of Francis and the intentions of Paul and Frederick William hampered the

¹ *Wickham Corresp.* II. 194 *et seq.*

² *Dropmore Papers*, IV. 515, 523; V. 85. Minto did not arrive until August 2nd.

³ *Ibid.* V. 147. Cf. 199, 400-6; VI. 254.

British naval and military plans to an unparalleled extent; and the key to the mistakes committed in both services in that War is to be found in the halting or perverse diplomacy of Petrograd, Vienna and Berlin.

The transference of Suvóroff's army to Switzerland, far from ending Austro-Russian disputes, exacerbated them. Jealous of the Marshal's fame, the Austrian authorities did nothing to further, and much to clog, his difficult task¹; and before his heroic Russians could struggle across the St Gothard and hew their way down the defile of the Reuss, Masséna had crushed Korsakoff at Zurich (September 25th-26th). The Court of Vienna, having ordered the Arch-duke to leave Switzerland, only a small Austrian force was left to help that Russian army, and it was overpowered. Suvóroff thereupon turned aside, and, brushing away the French, forced a passage into the Grisons, arriving at Chur on October 8th with an exhausted, but still undaunted, army. He swore never again to work for Austria, and all cooperation between her and Russia was thenceforth impossible. As for Paul, he was beside himself with rage, forthwith declared his Alliance with Austria at an end, and sought spasmodically to frame a fantastic union with Great Britain, Prussia, Turkey, Sweden and Denmark, for setting limits to Habsburg aggrandisement in Italy².

Thus ended the British plan for the liberation of Switzerland and the invasion of Franche-Comté. As a political conception it possessed certain merits; for the occupation of Switzerland by the French had given them control over northern Italy, Tyrol and Suabia. To eject them thence was the alpha and omega of Europe's liberation. But to attempt that task, especially from Italy, without making sure of wholehearted support from the valley of the Upper Rhine, bordered on the fantastic. Even apart from the tenacious French defence, the achievement demanded the most exact cooperation between the armies of Korsakoff, Suvóroff and the Archduke Charles. Austrian schemings and jealousies disarranged a programme which called for the most energetic and punctual performance. But the underlying conception, when carried out faithfully and intelligently in 1814, contributed materially to the overthrow of Napoleon.

The liberation of the Dutch Netherlands bulked large in the Anglo-Russian schemes for 1799; and, as has been seen, the help of Prussia long seemed a possibility. Had it come to pass, a great Russo-Prussian army,

¹ Gachot, chaps. VI, XVII; Hüffer, II. chap. II. Minto thought Thugut's aim was to spare the Austrian army (*Wickham Corresp.* II. 215).

² *Dropmore Papers*, VI. 19, 32; *Wickham Corresp.* II. 329; Hüffer, II. chap. II.; Waliszewski, *Paul I.*, chap. XII.

with British and possibly Danish or Swedish contingents, would probably have swept the French out of that land, as a composite Allied force did in 1814. In May, 1799, the prospects were highly favourable; for the French, owing to their defeats by the Austrian arms, had withdrawn most of their troops from the United Provinces¹. Nevertheless, on July 21st, 1799, Frederick William decided that he would try to arrange by negotiation for a French evacuation of that country. It was now full late for Great Britain and Russia to prepare adequately for the alternative course, a joint landing on the Dutch coast. The preparations were, however, hurried on, the most ardent advocate of the scheme being the usually cautious Grenville. Indeed, his optimism called forth a mild rebuke from Dundas (since held up to scorn as the embodiment of ignorant presumption!), who warned him against endorsing the hopeful estimate of George III, that the Allies ought to occupy the whole of the Netherlands before the advent of winter². Dundas promised to do his best to send enough British regiments; but the calls for them in Ireland (now menaced by French raids) and elsewhere were so exacting as to leave only a sprinkling of good troops among a number of raw battalions. Admiral Duncan's force, indeed, captured 13 Dutch warships at the Helder, thereby completing his previous two years' work and putting an end to all fears of invasion from that quarter. The land operations, however, miscarried. The Batavian troops did not rally to the proclamations of the Prince of Orange, as his supporters had led us to expect. First, the late arrival of the 17,000 Russian troops, and then their precipitate action in the attack at Bergen, marred the whole enterprise, and the Duke of York, by the capitulation of October 18th, withdrew the Allied forces.

This failure, coming soon after the miscarriage of Suvóroff's enterprise, exasperated the Tsar, who in December wrote to Vorontzoff at London, that he intended to abandon the Coalition and recall his troops to Russia. He would, however, during the winter of 1799-1800, leave them in their present quarters, hoping that those in England (really in the Channel Islands) might in the spring be used against the Biscay coast of France. If he remained in the Coalition, it would be on condition of the dismissal of Thugut and the renunciation by Austria of her system of unjust and excessive acquisitions. His effort would be the last chance of saving Europe³. With this characteristic explosion

¹ F.O. Russia, 42. Grenville to Whitworth, May 3rd, 1799.

² *Dropmore Papers*, v. 198, 206-210; *Spencer Papers*, II. 352; Fortescue, IV. Pt II, *passim*.

³ *Dropmore Papers*, VI. 109, 286.

the Second Coalition collapsed. It is a tribute to the forceful personality of Thugut that the fury of the Tsar, the representations of Minto, and the fixed hostility of Arch-duke Charles alike failed during six months of bewildering change to shake his authority. Hectoring, yet at times insinuating, passionate but adroit, the veteran in his "infernal cavern" now wore himself out for the aggrandisement of the Habsburgs in Italy; and, as Fortune favoured the Habsburgs in 1799 and frowned on their Allies, he could defy all the protests that came from London and Petrograd.

But now there befell an event which placed everything at hazard. On October 9th, 1799 (the day after Suvóroff's veterans had struggled into Chur) Bonaparte landed in Provence. Nelson and Sidney Smith considered that his escape from Egypt was due to the strange inactivity of the Turkish and Russian squadrons, which ought to have helped in patrolling the Eastern Mediterranean¹. His arrival in France and overthrow of the Directory brought about a bewildering change. France, latterly divided and dispirited, rallied to his call for unity; and Habsburg haughtiness so far abated as to consent to a settlement of the wearisome loan dispute with Great Britain, thus opening a prospect of an Anglo-Austrian Alliance². The old suspicions, however, hindered joint action far into the year 1800, probably because Francis II and Thugut were wavering between alluring arrangements held out by Bonaparte and a treaty with Great Britain, offered by the long-suffering Grenville. In the month of May, Thugut begged for three days to consider some of its provisions; but the three days lengthened out to six weeks. This exasperating delay hindered, *inter alia*, the despatch to the Genoese coast of Sir Ralph Abercrombie's force (finally sent to Egypt), which otherwise might have doubled the effectiveness of the help tendered by the fleet of Lord Keith to the Austrians engaged in besieging Masséna in Genoa³. As it was, that General's defence was so prolonged as materially to assist Bonaparte in the re-conquest of Italy. The lightning stroke of Marengo (June 14th) blasted the wide-spreading designs of Vienna, and reduced that Court to the position of a suppliant.

Shortly before the arrival at Vienna of news of that disaster, Minto signed with Thugut a Subsidy Convention for £2,000,000 (June 20th,

¹ Nicolas, IV. 44, 76, 89, 131, 140, 145, 171.

² F.O. Austria. Minto to Grenville, December 10th, 1799.

³ *Dropmore Papers*, VI. 163-7, 174, 186, 243, 250, 256, 262, 300. Plans of Anglo-Russian operations on the Biscay coast also came to naught. See *ibid.* V. 407-9, 434; VI. 53, 60, 85, 89, 146, 151.

1800). As usual, that compact came too late to retrieve the situation, and served merely to pay part of the debts heaped up by Habsburg ambition. Wickham had signed similar compacts with Bavaria, Würtemberg and Mainz, in the hope of filling up the void caused by the departure of the Russians. But these scrambling efforts merely dissipated British treasure, and scarcely even delayed the collapse of this ill-knit confederacy. In September, 1800, Francis on the advice of the Minister Count Lehrbach, accepted an armistice with the French; whereupon Thugut indignantly resigned, and a time of confusion ensued, ending with the Treaty of Lunéville (February 9th, 1801), a replica of the compact of Campo Formio. The dependence of Naples on the Habsburgs was illustrated by her surrender to the French in the Treaty of Florence (March 28th, 1801), whereby she ceded to them her part of Elba, excluded British vessels, and admitted French troops to her south-eastern ports. The chief Land Power now controlled all Italy, and seemed once more about to dominate the Mediterranean.

While the grandiose schemes of Austria on the shores of the Mediterranean made shipwreck, those of Great Britain gained in strength. In 1800 the siege of the French garrison in Valetta went steadily forward. The native Maltese made no impression whatever on its ramparts; but the blockade by sea became increasingly close, until on September 4th, 1800, the gallant Vaubois, hard pressed by famine, surrendered to the British commander, General Pigot. The Russians and Neapolitans did next to nothing in assuring this surrender. Hitherto, the British Government had entertained no thought of retaining the island. The restoration of the Knights of St John was more than once stated by Grenville to be the aim of his policy¹. Indeed, the touchiness of the Tsar on that subject and his insistence that Russian troops must form part of the future garrison of Valetta were alike notorious; and both British Ministers and Nelson were puzzled that he had not sent his Mediterranean fleet, with troops on board, to assist in the recapture of the island. Nevertheless, in the hope of humouring Paul, Grenville maintained that the island should either revert to the Knights or be assigned to him. On the other hand, Sir Augustus Paget, who had succeeded Hamilton at Naples, insisted on due satisfaction being accorded to that Court, which possessed ancient rights of suzerainty over the island; and he protested against Pigot's conduct in not hoisting the colours of Naples and the Knights by the side of the Union Jack.

¹ *E.g.* Grenville to Whitworth, October 5th; November 15th, 1798; Grenville to Hamilton, October 3rd, 1798. (F.O. Russia, 40, 41.)

and Malta vanished, he resolved to be at least the guardian of the Baltic and liberator of the seas. This new mood chimed in perfectly with the fixed policy of Bonaparte; and the two potentates began to plan a Northern League which should complete the isolation and ruin of the islanders.

Circumstances favoured the renewal of the first Armed Neutrality League of 1780. The Danes, the chief carriers of the North, now again had cause of complaint against us, especially concerning the capture of their frigate *Freya* and her convoy in July, 1800. The British Government instructed Whitworth (now Lord Whitworth) to proceed to Copenhagen, with a view to a friendly settlement of this affair. The desire of Grenville for such a settlement appears in his note of July 30th, 1800, to the Danish Government; and Earl Spencer instructed our cruisers to refrain from looking for neutral convoys, so that we might tide over that critical period without further disputes¹. In order, however, to back up Whitworth's negotiations, the Admiralty despatched a squadron to the Sound. Thereupon, on August 27th, Paul invited Sweden, Prussia and Denmark to reestablish the Armed Neutrality of 1780; and, two days later, he proclaimed an embargo on British ships in his ports, placing the crews under restraint. This hostile action led to no countermeasure by Great Britain, probably from a hope that a change of the moon would alter his mood. The news of a friendly settlement between England and Denmark mollified him for a time; but, early in October, the tidings of the surrender of Valetta to the British threw him into a paroxysm of rage; he reimposed the embargo, rigorously imprisoned the crews and expelled the British Embassy. Again, Grenville did not retaliate, and he counselled a conciliatory demeanour towards the other Baltic States, which had manifested no desire to join the new League. The only threatening sign was the occupation of Cuxhaven (a possession of Hamburg at the mouth of the river Elbe) by Prussian troops. Against this act Lord Carysfort, British Ambassador at Berlin, was ordered to make a firm protest.

On December 16th Russia concluded Conventions with Denmark and Sweden, defining the claims of the Armed Neutrals. They were in substance the following: (1) All vessels may sail on the coasts of belligerents. (2) Goods of belligerents, except contraband, are free

¹ F. Piggott and G. W. T. Omond, *Documentary History of the Armed Neutralities*, i. 379-384, 398-439; J. B. Scott, *Armed Neutralities of 1780-1800*, pp. 478-480; *Dropmore Papers*, vi. 287.

on board neutral shipping. (3) No port is reckoned as blockaded, unless the blockade be effective. (4) Neutral ships may be stopped only on adequate cause; and procedure as to prizes shall be judicial and uniform. (5) The declaration of a naval officer escorting a convoy, that it carries no contraband, shall guard it against search. In addition to these general principles, severe penalties are imposed on officers allowing contraband on board their ships, and other neutrals are invited to join the League¹. This programme, but for the addition of the fifth item, follows in general terms that of the First Armed Neutrality. But Catharine then assured Sir James Harris of her friendship for Great Britain and twice termed her league *la Nullité Armée*. The present procedure of Paul was avowedly hostile. Further, in view of the readiness with which, in 1793, Russia and Prussia had accepted the British policy of excluding all neutral commerce from France, those two Powers could not consistently complain of the maintenance of milder measures at the end of the same War. The fact that in 1793 they were Allies, and in 1800 were neutrals, could not justify their change of front if the question at issue were solely one of principle. It proved the question to be one, not of principle, but of expediency.

Here, indeed, was the weak part of the schemes of 1780 and 1800. Excellent in theory, in practice they were always infringed by States that held, or hoped to hold, command of the neighbouring seas. From the time of Philip II of Spain to that of Catharine, such had been the case. Besides, experience proved that the carriage of goods by neutrals to belligerents brought profits so enormous as to tempt to the breach of well recognised rules, and that, in the last resort, these could be upheld only by the maintenance of the right of search. In practice, therefore, the whole problem centred essentially in two questions: (1) Is due consideration shown to neutrals in the method of search? (2) Is the tribunal which adjudicates on doubtful cases a fair one?

British Ministers were resolved to uphold our claims, the stern and unbending nature of Grenville asserting itself the more markedly as the national danger increased. The sudden rally of half Europe to the side of France could not daunt him. He knew the fallaciousness of a mushroom Coalition well enough to expect that she would fare no better, and England would fight far better, for this transference of numbers. Nelson had always deemed the Allies a burden. The British navy and army were now highly efficient; and, while our seamen kept

¹ Piggott and Omond, I. 385 *et seq.*; *Camb. Mod. Hist.*, ix. pp. 45-9.

Nelson proceeded to Reval, and had a friendly reception, the new Tsar, Alexander, expressing a desire for peace with Great Britain¹. By the subsequent compromise of June 17th, 1801 (accepted by the other Baltic States) Great Britain and Russia agreed that in wartime the neutral flag should exempt from capture all cargoes except contraband of war and enemy property; and that blockade, to be legal, must be effective; contraband was defined, the right of search limited, and the rules of prize-courts were declared subject to the principles of equity². Finality in such a matter was not to be expected, and the usual disputes soon supervened; but, for the time, this Convention went far towards reconciling Continental peoples to the British maritime code and put an end to Bonaparte's plans of rousing all nations against "the tyrant of the seas."

Indeed, he had no chance now of overcoming Great Britain, who, when rid of embarrassing Allies, displayed her full striking power in the two brilliantly successful expeditions of the year 1801. Apart from these major operations, her arms had prospered. Saumarez retrieved his failure at Algeciras by a signal triumph over a Franco-Spanish squadron in the Gut of Gibraltar (July 12th-13th, 1801); and the capture of several West India Isles crowned the naval triumphs of the year. Other signs were propitious. The national finances had acquired stability since 1798, the temper of the nation was firm, and Ireland under the Union was becoming less unsettled. The supremacy of France on land being as incontestable as that of Great Britain at sea, peace seemed to be the natural outcome of the equipoise reached by eight years of warfare.

But, while some Britons pointed out the hopelessness of reducing the power of Bonaparte, others, noting his high-handed interference with the Dutch Republic whose independence he was pledged to respect, deprecated a surrender that must be the prelude to endless humiliations. Such were the objections of Grenville to any accommodation with Bonaparte. His implacable spirit (the epithet is Cornwallis's) had been shown in the reply to Bonaparte's pacific overture of Christmas, 1799—to the effect that peace would best be assured by the restoration of the French royal House. That reply was evidently designed primarily to satisfy the two Imperial Courts and the French Royalists, with whom we were then concerting extensive plans; but

¹ Czartoryski, *Memoirs*, I. chap. XI.; Waliszewski, *Paul I*, chaps. xv, xvi; General Löwenstern, *Memoirs*, I. p. 75; Nicolas, IV. 370-9.

² Scott, pp. 595-606. For Grenville's criticisms see *Dropmore Papers*, VII. 30-3.

it, undoubtedly, tended to rally all Frenchmen around the First Consul. Pitt, at that time, probably shared Grenville's animosity; for passion pervaded his speech of February 3rd, 1800, in which he recounted the aggressions and perfidies of Bonaparte. The great work of reconstruction accomplished by the First Consul had now altered the whole situation; and Pitt did not oppose the proposals for peace, which took form in September, 1801. His conduct was not consistent; for the Netherlands, which, alike in 1793, 1796 and 1797, he had declared to be essential to Britain's security, were now virtually at the disposal of France. But his change of front was probably due to war-weariness or hopelessness. He was in honour bound to support the Addington Ministry; yet he knew it to be unequal to the struggle with Bonaparte. Better, then, to end the War while we could do so without discredit. Such seem to have been his views. They clashed with those of Grenville; and the two kinsmen were destined never again to act together.

The Addington Ministry lent a friendly ear to pacific overtures from Paris. They were begun, in March, 1801, by Otto, deputed to this country for the exchange of prisoners; and they continued in London intermittently until the early autumn. Then, negotiations were resumed in earnest. On September 17th, Bonaparte issued Instructions to hurry them on, because he conjectured that Menou and the French garrison could not hold out at Alexandria beyond September 23rd (in point of fact, they had surrendered on August 30th), and, therefore, he desired to finish with England before the arrival of those tidings. The Addington Cabinet, weak in procedure, unlucky in regard to news, and eager for the French evacuation of Egypt, was conceding point after point, in order to secure this illusory advantage. It held out for the retention of that mainly British island, Tobago; but Bonaparte opposed a stiff refusal to this and other contentions, and ordered Otto to present the alternative of signature before October 2nd or war¹. Hawkesbury signed, on October 1st, the very day before the arrival of news of the French surrender at Alexandria and the forthcoming evacuation of Egypt. In no important British Treaty of modern times have haste and secrecy played so prominent a part; and there is little definite evidence as to the motives which led to so singular a compact. It may be thus summarised. All the British conquests overseas were restored to France, Spain and the United Provinces, except Trinidad (Spanish) and the Dutch settlements in Ceylon. The restitution of the Cape to the Dutch was conditional on its being opened to British and French

¹ *Nap. Corresp.* VII. 255.

commerce. Malta was restored to the Knights of St John, subject to various conditions. The French agreed to evacuate the kingdom of Naples and the Roman States, also Egypt, which reverted to Turkey, the British retiring from Elba. The integrity of the Turkish and Portuguese dominions was reaffirmed. The Signatories further recognised the independence of the Republic of the Seven Islands (the "Ionian Islands"), and reasserted the former rules as to the Newfoundland fisheries, leaving room, however, for new arrangements by mutual agreement.

The complacency of Hawkesbury appears in the fact that he at once sent news of this compact to Grenville, who received it with the utmost concern and indignation. "At no period of the greatest difficulty" (so he wrote to Dundas), "did I ever entertain an idea of agreeing to concessions that can be named with these." And he declared that he could not remain silent respecting sacrifices which would bring only a short interval of repose. Thomas Grenville thought the maintenance of a strong navy to be far more important than the details of the compact. Pitt, also, regarded peace as very precarious; but, while regretting the surrender of the Cape and the vagueness of the Maltese settlement, he pronounced the Treaty honourable¹. This verdict he amplified during the debate of November 3rd. Grenville and several other Pittites having bitterly attacked the Peace, the ex-Prime-Minister declared that the retrocessions of the Cape and Malta were matter for regret; but certain authorities held them to be of secondary value (a statement backed by the vigorous assertions of Nelson in the Upper House), and he believed Ceylon to be far more important than the Cape for the defence of India. As to the Mediterranean, that was a sphere of secondary import, when compared with the East and West Indies. In these last, we had secured Trinidad, more valuable for its wealth and its strategic position than Martinique, Guadaloupe or St Lucia. With respect to our former Allies, Naples, Sardinia and Portugal had made peace with the enemy, and we were not bound to do more for them; also, the claims of the House of Orange were still under consideration. As regards the French Royal House, we had never insisted on its restoration, but merely declared such a settlement to be the best safeguard for peace and security. In conclusion, he predicted that, if Bonaparte wished to establish a military despotism, this nation had proved itself so redoubtable that it would not be the first object of his attack. If the wishes of France corresponded to our own, we might

¹ *Dropmore Papers*, VII. 47-50.

hope for a long term of peace. The motion in favour of the Treaty, in spite of sharp attacks, was carried without a division. Pitt's pronouncement, while unsatisfactory even on the score of consistency, evinced small strategic insight and a lamentable lack of political foresight. At nearly every point, Grenville's sagacious pessimism was destined to be justified, at the expense of Pitt's kindly optimism. Public opinion was sharply divided as to the terms of peace. The *Times*, *Sun*, *Herald* and *True Briton* defended them, while sharp criticisms came from the *Morning Post*, *Morning Chronicle*, *Courier*, *Star*, *St James's Chronicle*, and, most of all, from Cobbett's *Porcupine*. Canning declared that the unreflecting multitude welcomed peace, while, after conversation with "many persons, merchants, planters and gentlemen," he found a universal condemnation of its conditions¹.

But worse was to follow. The Addington Cabinet now added to its mistakes by sending to Amiens, for the redaction of the definitive Treaty, the Marquis Cornwallis, who had lately described himself to a friend as out-of-sorts, low-spirited, and tired of everything². Though well supported by Merry, this weary negotiator utterly failed to hold his own against Joseph Bonaparte and Talleyrand; and the serious rebuffs sustained at Amiens were with reason ascribed to the "drowsiness" and utter want of experience of Cornwallis³. It is impossible within our limits even to refer to the negotiations. After numerous surrenders by Cornwallis, the terms of the Treaty of Amiens (March 25th, 1802) repeated those of the Preliminaries of London, except that (1) Portugal now surrendered part of her Guiana territory to France; (2) the Maltese compromise was defined in Article X, consisting of 13 clauses, the purport of which will appear later; (3) the Cape was ceded to the Dutch "in full sovereignty"; (4) the House of Orange was promised an indemnity, not at the expense of the Dutch Republic. It soon transpired that the indemnity would be found in the Germanic body, then in a state of flux owing to the Secularisations.

The omissions from the Treaty were also remarkable. It did not require that Bonaparte should evacuate Dutch territory or recognise the independence either of that Republic or of the Helvetic and Ligurian (Genoese) Republics. In his Treaty of Lunéville with Austria, he had undertaken to respect their independence; but events were to prove that the Addington Government erred in not insisting

¹ *The Windham Papers*, II. 174.

² *Cornwallis Corresp.* III. 382.

³ *Malmesbury, Diaries*, IV. 71, 261; *Eng. Hist. Rev.* April, 1900.

on a similar contract. Neither did the Treaty of Amiens stipulate the renewal of a treaty of commerce with France, Addington declaring on May 3rd that he opposed such a measure. Therefore British merchants soon saw their products virtually shut out not only from France, but from the French Colonies which Great Britain now restored. The Treaty, also, effected little for the House of Orange, and nothing for that of Savoy, both of which, in 1793, we had undertaken to uphold. Above all, in face of the well-marked trend of Bonaparte's oriental policy, the Peace of Amiens surrendered the keys of India, viz., the Cape and Malta, to weak authorities over whom he could readily acquire complete control. It reestablished at Valetta the Order of the Knights of St John (much enfeebled by recent events), required the speedy withdrawal of the British garrison and the temporary admission of 2000 Neapolitan troops, and placed the island under the guarantee of the Great Powers. Obviously, these arrangements were precarious; and the events of the next few months proved that, while extending his power in Europe, Bonaparte was resolved to make the Mediterranean a French lake and to recommence the plans which had been shorn asunder by the genius of Nelson.

CHAPTER III

THE CONTEST WITH NAPOLEON

1802-1812

I

A TREATY of peace has small chance of surviving, unless it corresponds to the vital needs of the signatories. If it cramps the expansive energies of great nations, it will prove to be but an uneasy truce. In these fundamentals, as also in lesser details, the Peace of Amiens was radically defective. It concluded a War in which Great Britain and France parted on even terms. The British, triumphant at sea, had taken all the Colonies of France, besides expelling her troops from Egypt. The French had conquered the Belgic Provinces and large parts of Germany and Italy, but had failed to acquire any British territory. Their primacy in western and southern Europe was more than balanced by the world-supremacy achieved by the British Navy. Their commerce and industries had been held as in a vice, while, thanks to the Industrial Revolution and Sea Power, those of the United Kingdom continued steadily to advance. Strategically, the combatants had come to a stalemate. Economically, the advantage lay with the Island Power.

Nevertheless, the Addington Administration had concluded the Peace "in such an unskilful, hasty and conceding way" (the words are those of Pitt¹), as to lead to the restitution of all the French Colonies, leave Bonaparte almost a free hand in Continental affairs, and fetter British industries and commerce. The Treaty of Amiens repeated and even exaggerated the characteristic defects of that diplomatic deadlock, the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle of 1748; for, while sacrificing the conquests achieved by the British Navy overseas, it failed to assure the Balance of Power on the Continent. Consequently, the military and political energies of France, now directed by the untiring brain of Bonaparte, were to have free play on the weak and crumbling States on her borders; whereas the industrial energies of the British people, far from gaining the full advantages expected from a peace, in certain quarters experienced a check; for, owing to the strange dislike of

¹ Malmesbury, *Diaries*, iv. 76

commercial treaties entertained by Addington and Hawkesbury, no condition as to the renewal of commercial relations was stipulated at Amiens. Accordingly, Bonaparte was free to exclude British products, not only from France and the States subject to her, but also from the French Colonies, which Great Britain restored at the Peace. On June 30th, 1802, he instructed General Andréossi, about to proceed to London as his Ambassador, that he would accord "if not a Treaty of Commerce, at least a series of private arrangements and compensations"; and to this end he sent over commercial agents, who were to visit the chief British centres. But the Addington Government, regarding them with suspicion, refused to let them proceed in their official capacity, because there was no Treaty of Commerce between the two nations; while Bonaparte declared their investigations a necessary preliminary to any such compact. Accordingly, a deadlock ensued on this important question.

Equally serious was the failure of Addington and his colleagues to require in the Treaty the recognition by Bonaparte of the independence of the Batavian, Helvetic, Cisalpine and Ligurian Republics. They regarded those questions as settled by Article 13 of the recent Austro-French Treaty of Lunéville, which stipulated the independence of those States. He, on the contrary, maintained that those stipulations concerned France and Austria, not Great Britain; and he instructed Andréossi that his "first care" must be "to prevent on every occasion any intervention of the British Government in Continental affairs." In fact, before the signature of the Treaty of Amiens, he had intervened in the affairs of the Batavian and Cisalpine States, retaining his troops in the former, securing his nomination as President of the latter (now entitled the Italian Republic), and largely deciding the character of their Constitutions. The weakness of Addington, in not formally protesting against these actions before the signature of the Peace, deprived him of the technical right of protest against further proceedings consequent upon them. But the affairs of nations are not decided by technicalities; and Bonaparte's claim to exclude Great Britain from all participation in Continental affairs was certain, if persisted in, to lead to war; for such a claim, when emphasised by the continuance of French troops in Dutch territory, implied French control of the ports facing our eastern coast and of the Cape of Good Hope. The Preliminaries of London had stipulated that Cape Town should become a free port belonging to the independent Batavian Republic; but by the Treaty of Amiens it was

ceded to the Dutch "in full sovereignty"; and they were, therefore, free to dispose of it as they thought fit. Great concern was expressed on this head by Windham, Grenville and others in the debates of May 3rd-13th, 1802; and the bland optimism of Addington and Hawkesbury failed to restore confidence. Much concern was also felt at the cession by Spain of the vast territory of Louisiana to France.

Passivity or timidity also characterised the policy of the Continental monarchies; and Napoleon (his Christian name was officially used after the assumption of the Consulate for Life in August, 1802) pushed on his designs without hindrance. Supreme in the Ligurian and Italian Republics, he assured his control over that Peninsula by annexing Piedmont, Parma and Elba, in September and October respectively. Against these encroachments the British, Austrian and Neapolitan Governments alike failed to proffer any effective protests. The Tsar Alexander, preoccupied in domestic affairs and annoyed at the Maltese settlement effected at Amiens, treated Great Britain with marked coldness; and Napoleon, for a time, successfully flattered his vanity by arranging with him many of the details respecting the Secularisations of the German Ecclesiastical States. Francis II, cowed by the defeats of 1793-1800, acquiesced in the tame counsels of dull but acquisitive bureaucrats of his own stamp. At Berlin, Frederick William III followed suit. "The King's chief happiness" (wrote the British *Chargé d'affaires*, Sir George Jackson), "consists in the absence of all trouble. ...He is guided by his fears and distrusts his own powers." Furthermore, in view of the Francophil tendencies of President Jefferson, the precarious mental condition of George III, and the subservience of Charles IV of Spain to his consort's paramour, the world seemed to lie prostrate at the feet of Napoleon.

The first sign of a revival of spirit occurred early in October, 1802, when Napoleon intervened in the civil strifes of the Swiss, marched a French column into their land and bade them send delegates to Paris to accept his mediation. On this question, the Addington Cabinet acted with a show of firmness. On October 9th, Hawkesbury drew up a note expressing regret at this infraction of the Treaty of Lunéville, and a hope that France would not "further attempt to control that independent nation in the exercise of their undoubted rights." He also instructed Paget (now at Vienna) to enquire whether that Court would aid the Swiss to resist; and he despatched an agent, Moore, to concert plans with the leaders of the Federals. Both overtures failed.

Vienna, expectant of further favours from Paris, declined to move on behalf of Helvetic Independence; the Tsar was equally inert; and the Swiss Federals, overawed by a large French force, acceded to the demands of Napoleon¹.

That these events caused a marked change in Anglo-French relations, appears in the difference of tone between the Instructions of September 10th and those of November 14th, issued to Lord Whitworth when proceeding as Ambassador to Paris. The former emphasise "our desire to give proof on all occasions of our sincere disposition to cultivate a good understanding between the two countries." The latter authorise Whitworth to "state most distinctly His Majesty's determination never to forego his right of interfering in the affairs of the Continent on every occasion in which the interests of his own dominions or those of Europe in general appear to him to require it." Further, Hawkesbury pointed out that, as Talleyrand had recognised the reasonableness of Great Britain acquiring compensations for the recent extensions of French territory and influence, she might now justly claim the retention of certain of her conquests. In particular, Whitworth was charged to protest against the continued occupation of Dutch territory by French troops, seeing that we had restored important Colonies to that Republic, on consideration of its remaining entirely independent. He was to keep silence respecting the aims of British policy, especially respecting Malta; for, though we should be justified in holding that island as some counterpoise to the immense increase of French power, no decision had yet been reached on that subject. Instructions of this character proved that the Peace of Amiens was hanging by a thread. In part, the dispute resembled that which had brought the two nations to war ten years before: had the French the right to interfere with the independence of the Dutch Republic? On the present occasion, however, the menace to this independence was far more serious than in 1792-3. Then, Pitt and Grenville had resisted the French attempt to abrogate the treaty rights of the Dutch to control the Scheldt estuary. Now Addington and Hawkesbury were protesting against Napoleon's endeavour to control by armed force the policy of that people.

Moreover, the extension of his power over Italy, his keen interest in the recovery of Egypt and the partition of the Turkish empire brought Mediterranean questions to a prominence undreamt of in 1793, and made Malta a storm-centre no less threatening than that of

¹ Cobbett's *Ann. Reg.* (1803), pp. 1018-20; *Dropmore Papers*, vii. 128.

the Dutch Netherlands. Malta was an outpost of Egypt, as Egypt was of India. If the island were held only by the moribund Order of the Knights of St John, then the overland route to India would speedily pass into the hands of Napoleon. If he continued to control the Dutch Republic, then the Cape of Good Hope, and with it the sea route to the East Indies, would be at his disposal. Thus, the increase of French power in the Netherlands and on the shores of the Mediterranean in time of nominal peace was bringing within his grasp the two alternative schemes for the ruin of Great Britain which the events of 1798 seemed to have wrecked, viz. an invasion from the coast whence it can best be attempted, and a resumption of the oriental adventures cut short by the exploit of Nelson.

By the autumn of 1802, so clear were the danger signals that Addington assumed a firm tone; but, by this time, so accustomed was Napoleon to submission or complaisance that he abated not one of his demands. The protests of the Dutch Ambassador against the retention of French troops in his country were disregarded. Delegates from the Swiss Cantons were summoned to Paris to receive eventually at the hands of Napoleon the Act of Mediation, sagaciously designed by him, as Mediator, for healing their schisms and assuring his control. Spain was sinking under his control. The Turks were alarmed by French intrigues in Corfu, the Morea and the Levant, which portended a partition of their empire. Early in the year 1802, Lord Elgin, our Ambassador at Constantinople, wrote as follows: "The Porte considers her interests and tranquillity secure while England possesses Malta, but not so after our abandoning it." Whitworth, also, reported, in December, 1802, that Egypt was the great object of Napoleon's ambition and that he might acquire it by coercing or bargaining with the Turks¹.

So threatening was the outlook that public opinion in these Islands began to harden. Protests against the overbearing conduct of Napoleon multiplied in the Press and called forth angry retorts in the *Moniteur*, often from the First Consul himself. He, also, complained of the deference shown to the Comte d'Artois at Holyrood and the harbouring of French *Émigrés*. Nevertheless, Ministers, while refusing to fetter the Press or expel refugees, endeavoured to humour the First Consul. Even after the Swiss embroglio, Otto, the French agent at London, could write as follows:

¹ F.O. Turkey, 35. Elgin to Hawkesbury, January 5th, 1802; *Paget Papers*, II. 61, 72; O. Browning, *England and Napoleon*, pp. 6-10, 16, 25-9.

All his proceedings were governed by calculation; and one of his Councillors deemed this provocation intentional¹.

Another of his actions serves to strengthen this inference. In the same month, January, 1803, he issued secret instructions to General Decaen, now appointed Governor of the French East India Colonies, to proceed with a small expeditionary force to Pondicherry, there carefully to investigate Indian affairs and prepare for the future, which (so he informed him) might be such as to invest his name with lasting renown. He, also, referred to the renewal of hostilities with England as probable in September, 1804; and, since they were certain to involve the Dutch in hostilities with her, he instructed Decaen in that case to be ready to occupy the Cape or any other desirable *point d'appui*. The despatch of Decaen's expedition in March, 1803, caused some apprehension at London, which was finally to be justified by his proceedings at the Cape.

For the present, the anxiety of Ministers centred chiefly on French schemes that threatened the security of the overland route to India. From the Mediterranean came news as to movements of French troops to its coasts, especially to Corsica; and their agents were reported to be very active in the Republic of the Ionian Isles and on the coasts of Albania and the Morea. Similar information reached Petrograd. There, the sympathies of the Tsar had been Francophil. Annoyed at the terms of Article X of the Treaty of Amiens respecting Malta, he withheld his guarantee of those arrangements, and in this was followed by Prussia. But the French moves against Turkey caused him grave concern. On January 7th, 1803, Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren, British Ambassador at Petrograd, reported that, according to Russian official advices from Paris, Napoleon was about to notify to Russia his resolve to acquire the Morea. Prince Czartoryski, Foreign Minister, when confirming that information, added that the Emperor Alexander disapproved these projects of partition; and on January 20th he told Warren that the Emperor Alexander "wished the English to keep Malta." On February 27th, he stated that Napoleon "wished to oblige Great Britain to declare war against France." On March 25th, Warren reported that the Russian Government "would even be sorry that the British troops evacuated the island," and favoured the issue of a decisive declaration by us such as would "finish the affair²."

Apprehensions concerning the Levant were not confined to

¹ Pelet, *Opinions de Napoléon*, ch. III.

² F.O. Russia, 174. See, too, Hardman, *History of Malta* (chs. xvii, xxi, xxii); O. Browning, *England and Napoleon*, pp. 70 et seq.; Mollien, *Memoirs*, I. 334.

Ministerial circles in London. In a conversation which Pitt had with George Rose, he at once entered on the topic of Sebastiani's Report, deeming its publication an announcement of the actual designs of France on Egypt. The two friends agreed that her acquisition of Egypt would seriously imperil British India; also, that the intrigues of Sebastiani in the Ionian Islands, with a view to their reoccupation by France, warranted a thorough explanation¹. So general were these fears that the Addington Administration assumed a firm attitude. On February 9th, Hawkesbury charged Whitworth not to enter into any discussion respecting Malta, until the French Government consented either to restore completely the *status quo* at the time of the Peace of Amiens, or to admit the reasonableness of our receiving some suitable compensation for the recent extensive additions to French territory.

In reply to this request no satisfactory assurance was forthcoming. Talleyrand blandly reasserted that Sebastiani's mission was "strictly commercial," and that Napoleon sincerely desired peace, which moreover was imperiously dictated to him by the penury of his finances. Shortly afterwards, on February 18th, the First Consul sent for Whitworth and treated him, not to soothing falsehoods, but to pugnacious half-truths, complaining that all the provocations came from London, that we had broken the Treaty by not evacuating Egypt and Malta, that we harboured assassins, that every wind which blew from England bore nothing but hatred. He declared that he could easily reconquer Egypt, but would not do so, lest he should seem the aggressor, besides which that land must sooner or later fall to France. Moreover, what had he to gain by a war with England? Why should not the two nations come to an understanding and so govern the world? But nothing (he proceeded) would overcome the hatred of the British Government; and the issue now was—would we fulfil the terms of the Treaty of Amiens or have war? Whitworth, thereupon, temperately set forth the material difference between the present state of things and that when peace was concluded. Napoleon cut him short: "I suppose you mean Piedmont and Switzerland: *ce sont des..., vous n'avez pas le droit d'en parler à cette heure.*" He added that Sebastiani's mission was necessitated on military grounds by our infraction of the Treaty of Amiens; but, soon afterwards, he authorised Talleyrand to state that he was contemplating a guarantee of the integrity of the Turkish empire, which would remove our fears respecting Egypt.

¹ G. Rose, *Diaries*, II, 18-20; *Papers on the Discussions with France* (1802-3), pp. 377-86.

Addington's patience and Napoleon's petulance were disgusting the nation with the peace became abundantly evident. Canning, an enthusiastic admirer of Pitt and a persistent belittler of Addington, pointed the contrast between them in his celebrated song:

And oh! if again the rude whirlwind should rise,
The dawning of peace should fresh darkness deform,
The regrets of the good and the fears of the wise
Shall turn to the Pilot that weathered the storm.

Much, however, could be urged in favour of Addington's waiting policy. Peace having been concluded, its author had to ensure for it a fair trial. Moreover, so impetuously self-willed an opponent as Napoleon was likely to put himself in the wrong. Addington, Alexander I, Fox, Metternich, Hardenberg, Castlereagh and Talleyrand were, in succession, to find out the advantage of giving him free rein at a crisis; or, as the last named phrased it: *Il n'y a jamais eu de conspirateur dangereux contre lui que lui-même*¹. The sole hope for the preservation of peace in the spring of 1803 was that he should substitute reason for menace, and, admitting that his annexations and other proceedings had naturally alarmed Great Britain, should offer either to forego one or more of them or to admit the justice of her claim to compensation, conceded in the negotiations at Amiens.

This was the gist of Hawkesbury's note of April 3rd to Andréossi, which pointed out that France had hitherto refused to give the assurances and explanations we had a right to expect; but that a settlement was desired on the following bases: Great Britain to retain Malta in perpetuity, indemnifying the Knights of St John; France to evacuate the Dutch Netherlands and Switzerland, but to retain Elba; Great Britain to acknowledge the kingdom of Etruria and the Italian and Ligurian Republics, provided that the King of Sardinia received a suitable indemnity. These demands were large; but Hawkesbury added that, if they were deemed impracticable, the French Government should suggest "some other *equivalent security* by which His Majesty's object in claiming the permanent possession of the island of Malta may be accomplished, and the independence of the island secured." These terms, then, were merely our first word in a new negotiation². In reply, Talleyrand, while urging complaints, declared that France would accord all possible satisfaction and security, short of

¹ Talleyrand, *Mémoires*, II. 135.

² Coquelle, p. 54; O. Browning, pp. 54-7.

acquiescing in our possession of Malta. But, after he had seen the First Consul, his statement became more defiant. Napoleon, he declared, would rather be cut to pieces than consent to a British acquisition of Malta, and he took his stand on the inviolability of the Treaty of Amiens. Talleyrand suggested, as alternative plans of solving the Maltese problem, either a mixed garrison of French, British, Italians and Germans in Valetta, or (as Joseph Bonaparte, also, suggested) the British possession of Corfu or Crete in lieu of Malta. Whitworth declared that nothing but the occupation of Malta for a term of years would relieve our apprehensions. Privately, however, he outlined to Hawkesbury a possible compromise, viz. either the retention of Malta for a term of years or the garrisoning merely of the fortifications of Valetta, the rest of the island being left to the Knights.

By this time, a fresh cause for apprehension had arisen. Early in April, Napoleon despatched 7000 more French troops into the Dutch Netherlands, where they occupied commanding positions. Here was an occasion for the British Government to protest against this further violation of the Treaty of Lunéville; but Hawkesbury let slip the opportunity, and allowed the discussion to turn almost entirely upon Malta. On April 13th, he approved Whitworth's proposals and suggested ten years as the minimum term for our occupation of Malta—which would admit of the construction of docks at Lampedusa, with a view to the permanent occupation of that neighbouring islet. Joseph Bonaparte, in the absence of the First Consul at St Cloud, favoured some such solution; and, on April 18th, Whitworth expressed hopes of a peaceful settlement. What, then, was his surprise three days later to hear from Talleyrand that the crux of the problem was, not the reestablishment of the Order of St John, but “the suffering Great Britain to acquire a possession in the Mediterranean!”

This brought the dispute to a climax; and the British Ministers resolved to bring it to a decisive issue. They were moved thereto by news as to the concentration of troops on the Northern coasts of France and in Zealand as if for an invasion. Further, as the French navy comprised only 40 effective sail of the line, a rupture, if it were to come, as seemed inevitable, had better come soon, while we possessed a clear superiority over the French and Dutch fleets. True, our supplies of seamen and naval stores had run dangerously low, owing to the economies of the Earl of St Vincent at the dockyards; but, even so, the advantage at sea lay with us in 1803, while in 1805 it would be precarious owing to Napoleon's control of nearly all the ports of

western Europe, from Amsterdam to Spezzia¹. His policy of coast control and the avowal of a design to exclude us from the Mediterranean threatened the national existence; and no Ministry, however pacific, dared run risks on so vital a point. All the advice that reached Downing Street was in favour of firmness. From the beginning of the crisis, George III, whose influence over the Cabinet was great, had been eager for war. The Grenvilles and Malmesbury had throughout censured Hawkesbury's proceedings as weak, undignified and certain to lead to further humiliations. Pitt, deeming himself privately pledged to support Addington, was more tolerant; but he viewed the European situation with "infinite anxiety," and after Napoleon's official Declaration of February 21st, 1803, held that we must not give up Malta "without fresh and substantial security²." Refusing the suggestions of several friends that they should all seek to overthrow the Cabinet, he continued to it a general support, and privately advised Lord Chatham, Master of Ordnance, to act firmly on the Maltese question. This indeed was the general opinion; and Addington, for his own credit, could not now retreat. In common with nearly all our leading politicians, he and Hawkesbury deeply distrusted Napoleon, believing him to be animated by boundless ambition, an inveterate hatred of this country and an utter disregard of principle. Thus, personal considerations, not less than regard for national security, led Ministers to insist on a speedy answer to the alternatives: either the possession of Malta for ten years, or war. To this fundamental condition, Hawkesbury on April 23rd, appended articles requiring the consent of France to the cession of Lampedusa by His Sicilian Majesty³, the evacuation of the Dutch Netherlands within a month of the signature of a convention on these topics, and the provision of a suitable indemnity for the King of Sardinia, failing which last Great Britain would refuse to acknowledge the Italian and Ligurian Republics. If these conditions were not accepted within seven days, Whitworth was to leave Paris.

The arrival of terms so uncompromising, which in all but name formed an ultimatum, surprised Whitworth, who, in the first instance stated them informally to Talleyrand; but, when that Minister declined to receive them in this way, he repeated them officially, only to meet with a stiff refusal. He then requested an interview with the peacemaker, Joseph Bonaparte, who admitted that, in private conversations

¹ *Dropmore Papers*, vii. 148; *Barham Papers*, iii. 68, 69; O. Browning, 44, 100, 174, 191; Coquelle, 62-5.

² *Dropmore Papers*, vii. 149, 151.

³ Ferdinand IV was willing (A. Bonnefons, *Marie Caroline*, p. 261).

with the First Consul, three or four years had been named by the latter as the longest possible term for a British occupation of Malta. Joseph Bonaparte, also, now declared that he found in his brother a disposition to avoid a rupture, and that he was perplexed how to act. Whitworth, therefore, considered that negotiation was still possible, but that it was likely to be with the sole purpose of gaining time for French preparations. The First Consul had just sent off General Lauriston to London, with despatches for Andréossi, who would probably be recalled, as too Anglophil in sentiment. Talleyrand, however, also wrote to Andréossi, urging him to see Hawkesbury and try to bring him to a reasonable decision. But the British Cabinet had uttered its last word, and was now as inflexible as it had previously been complaisant. At Paris, Joseph Bonaparte and Talleyrand worked hard for peace; and their efforts can hardly but have been furthered by the arrival of news of the almost complete destruction of the French forces in Hayti. Foreseeing the effects of these tidings on the temper of the First Consul, Whitworth did not attend the Sunday reception at the Tuileries, and thus escaped the tirade prepared for him, which in fractions was vented on those present.

Various expedients were resorted to by the friends of peace for the purpose of delaying Whitworth's departure from Paris, fixed for May 3rd. Joseph Bonaparte sent a belated proposal to hand over Malta to Russia, which Whitworth declined to consider. Talleyrand pointed out, that the final British terms would in any case necessitate a consultation of all the Powers named as guarantors in Article X—a proceeding evidently designed to gain time. The final proposal, that, after Malta had been in British hands for a term of years, it should revert to Russia, met with some support from Whitworth, as calculated to humour Bonaparte, whose violent temper, if crossed at all points, might lead to something desperate. Markoff did not think the Tsar would accede to this plan, and, on May 7th, Hawkesbury brushed aside all these proposals as "loose, indefinite and unsatisfactory," adding that he had authentic information that Russia would not consent to garrison Malta. Nevertheless, he sent to Whitworth Instructions practically identical with those of April 23rd. But Napoleon would not hear of a longer occupation of Malta than a year or two. In a Council of seven persons held at St Cloud on May 11th only two, Joseph Bonaparte and Talleyrand, were for peace. The others followed the First Consul, in approving a course certain to lead to a rupture.

Unfortunately, the war party was now strengthened by the arrival

of an offer from the Tsar to intervene in the Maltese affair; and this was taken as a sign of his intention to support France. Afterwards, Napoleon would not listen to any pacific proposal, even from his brother. Accordingly, Whitworth quitted Paris on May 12th, having been delayed (as he phrased it) by "infamous chicanery." On the morrow, Talleyrand sent after him a note, evidently inspired by the First Consul, setting forth with much acerbity the faults of the British Government, dilating on his championship of the sanctity of Treaties, and declaring that, if France gave way now, she would next be required to destroy her harbours, fill up her canals, and ruin her manufactures. He charged Great Britain with insulting the French nation and aiming at the destruction of the Order of St John; and he once more offered to place Malta under the control of either Russia, or Austria, or Prussia. Hawkesbury declined the proposal, as calculated merely to spin out the negotiation. Whitworth embarked at Calais on May 17th, and was received in London somewhat coolly by Ministers as having exceeded his Instructions and listened to dilatory proposals. He, for his part, privately criticised Hawkesbury and stated that France, being unprepared for war, would have given way about Malta, if our terms had not been so specific. Certainly, Joseph Bonaparte, Talleyrand, and a few other leading men, desired peace even at the price of extensive concessions; but the British Ministers had become convinced that Napoleon's sole aim was to gain time until the naval situation became less unfavourable. Talleyrand, finally, declared that, if the British Government had humoured Napoleon to some extent, he would have made them a present of Malta¹. No words of the First Consul bear out that statement.

In one important matter, however, the Addington Cabinet had offended Russia. If we may trust the statements of Vorontzoff, Russian Ambassador at London, he had, previous to the rupture, handed to Hawkesbury the Tsar's offer of mediation on the Maltese affair. No notice was taken of this offer; and, after the outbreak of war, Vorontzoff was astounded by Addington's statement in the House of Commons that, if such mediation had been offered, due regard would have been paid to it. To his request for an explanation, Hawkesbury replied that he had not had time to bring the matter before the King, but would take an early opportunity of doing so. As will shortly appear, Fox pressed the House to declare in favour of Russia's mediation, and Ministers complied; but, after Hawkesbury's evasion, Alexander, of

¹ O. Browning, 224-69; Malmesbury, IV. 250-4.

course, refused to deal with the Addington Cabinet. Well might Vorontzoff declare that our Foreign Office "spoilt all¹."

In a question so complex as that of the rupture of the Peace of Amiens it is not easy to adjust the responsibility with any approach to exactitude. That the British Government was, in a technical sense, guilty is obvious; and there is no force in the plea that the terms of that Peace were unworkable; for the men who signed it were also those who infringed Article X. Moreover, in the last stages of the negotiation, their insistence was so rigid as to expose them to the charge of breaking the peace of the world in order to acquire Malta. Further, their procedure was inconsistent. In the month of April, 1803, they assumed an unbending attitude, which was all the more surprising and annoying by contrast with their tame acquiescence throughout nearly the whole of the year 1802. Doubtless, their intention finally was to impress Napoleon with the power of the British Government to make out a good case, and of the nation to support it, if need be, by force of arms. If so, the change was belated and abrupt. Probably, it seemed to him unreal; for it evoked from him further efforts at intimidation, nor did he lower his tone until, to his surprise, he discovered the imminence of hostilities which might cost him an expeditionary force. There seems, therefore, good ground for concluding that Addington and his colleagues never recovered the ground lost by their previous tame acquiescence, and that, by the end of the year 1802, Napoleon had concluded that they were amenable to methods of intimidation which he had found successful in every other instance. A study of history should have revealed to him the error of coercing the Island Power overmuch. But it should, also, have prescribed to the British Government the maxim *Principiis obsta*, in dealing with a man who both in power and ambition dwarfed Lewis XIV. Moreover, they took no steps effectively to explain the British case; and by failing to bring home to the public Napoleon's violations of the Treaties of Lunéville and Amiens, and by letting the whole stress lie on Malta (the weakest part of their case) they appeared before the world as treaty-breakers, while he figured as the champion of international justice. No important negotiations have ever been more signally mismanaged than those of Amiens and their sequel by Addington and Hawkesbury. From this censure however, the impartial critic will except Whitworth, who, throughout, tempered firmness with discretion, manliness with extreme forbearance.

¹ G. Rose, *Diaries*, II. 41-4. Vorontzoff detested Hawkesbury. See Malmesbury, IV. 192, 247, 253.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that for a self-respecting Power to keep at peace with Napoleon was at all times difficult, and in 1803 wellnigh impossible. His military and civic triumphs filled him with boundless confidence and swelled his inordinate pride. The diplomatic success over Great Britain gained at Amiens transcended the fondest hopes of Frenchmen¹. Yet every month of peace aggrandised his power, and so swift was the transformation as to bewilder all beholders. Great Britain, who both could and ought to have protested at the first infraction of the Treaties of Lunéville and Amiens, was informed by him that the former Treaty did not concern her; and her statesmen, intent on the "experiment of continuing the Peace," failed to insist emphatically on the maintenance of the order of things established by those Treaties. But this technical omission could not bind their hands indefinitely; and, when even the Orient came within the sweep of Napoleon's designs, they could not but intervene. They did so awkwardly, even clumsily. They took no effective steps to concert with Russia measures such as would, probably, have imposed moderation on the First Consul. And when her offer of mediation arrived it received cavalier treatment, which was destined to postpone for a year all hope of an Anglo-Russian alliance.

These shortcomings, however, arose from slackness and incompetence, not from lust of domination. In view of the Eastern projects of Napoleon, it was but reasonable for Great Britain to require the occupation of Malta during a period which would admit of the construction of docks at Lampedusa, which islet would then serve as a Mediterranean base, while Malta reverted to the Maltese. In the circumstances, nothing short of this could safeguard the interests of Great Britain in the Levant. Her retirement from the Mediterranean at the end of 1796 had given free play to the Oriental designs of 1798, which had been directed against India. Her exclusion from that sea and its domination by France were clearly the aims of Napoleon in gaining control over large parts of its coastline in 1802-3. A Peace so fertile in menacing aggressions was no peace; and for its rupture he was in effect responsible. Doubtless, he would in any case have made war, so soon as the French and Dutch navies were ready; and his Instructions to Decaen point to the autumn of 1804 as the probable time². Thus, the Addington Administration, notwithstanding all the futility of its procedure, was right in its final resolve to bring matters to an

¹ Pasquier, *Mémoires*, I. 161.

² For Decaen's doings at the Cape see *Eng. Hist. Rev.* January, 1900.

immediate issue. News that arrived from Naples justified their decision. Our Ambassador there, à Court, wrote to Hawkesbury, on April 20th, that the French Envoy, Alquier, had required the Government to make common cause with France against Great Britain; for (said Alquier) "the interests of the two countries are the same....It is the intention of France to shut every port to the English from Holland to the Turkish dominions, to prevent the exportation of her merchandise and to give a mortal blow to her commerce, for there she is most vulnerable. Our joint forces may wrest from her hands the island of Malta." Acton, in reply, refused to violate the neutrality of Ferdinand towards his former Ally¹. These tidings from Naples clinched the evidence that Napoleon was planning a war of annihilation against the Island Power².

The British Government declared war on May 18th; and, on that same day, H.M. frigate *Doris*, after a running fight, captured off Ushant an armed French lugger which resisted detention. The conduct of the *Doris* was perhaps a little severe, Admiral Cornwallis, who commanded the squadron off Brest, having on May 16th ordered his cruisers merely to detain French vessels³. Infuriated by this event, the First Consul ordered the detention of all British males of military age then in France, a tyrannical act which more than anything else tended to make our people wholehearted in the War. These incidents and the diatribes of Napoleon against *la perfide Albion* tended to popularise a War which the great mass of Frenchmen had previously disliked. On this side of the Channel, the contest was at first taken up somewhat doubtfully. Parliament was kept in the dark as to the merits of the case, and not until May 23rd was it in possession of information sufficient for a debate. Fox, Grey and Whitbread protested against the rupture. The views of Fox were a curious mixture of fatuity and good sense. To his friends he had long been declaring that Bonaparte was really afraid of war, and that the French annexation of Piedmont and treatment of Germany were defensible. As for Malta and Egypt, he belittled their importance, and more than once asserted that the question of Peace or War was bound up with that of turning out the Addington Ministry. On the other hand, he saw clearly that we could not possibly help the Swiss, and that war with France would probably

¹ F.O. Sicily and Naples, 54.

² French troops soon reoccupied the heel of Italy, an act which the French Foreign Office sought to justify by reference to an alleged secret article of the Treaty of Amiens, which had no existence. See *Eng. Hist. Rev.* April, 1900, pp. 331-5.

³ J. Leyland, *Blockade of Brest*, I. 14.

tend to aggrandise her power¹. In his speech of May 23rd, he declared vehemently that the War was all about "bare Malta, unconnected with any great, general, generous interest of Europe"; but he concluded by strongly urging acceptance of the recent proposal of the Emperor of Russia to mediate between us and France on the Maltese question. Hawkesbury made a lame reply, stating that, while he sympathised with the end proposed, yet its realisation must cause hesitation, delay and the enfeebling of the nation's effort. Pitt, also, applauded the motives of Fox, but advised trust in the Government as to the time and manner of giving them effect. Above all, he pleaded for unity in the prosecution of the struggle for national security. Finally, Hawkesbury promised to use all possible means for coming to an understanding with Russia respecting the subject in dispute. On May 28th, he drew up a Note requesting the Tsar to mediate, not merely respecting Malta, but also in the affairs of Europe. The following was suggested as a basis: Great Britain to retain Malta, unless France would either renounce all her Italian possessions and reinstate the King of Sardinia, or retire from the Belgic Provinces, placing them under some powerful sovereign. The Tsar waved aside these proposals, probably from dislike and distrust of the Addington Cabinet.

The tongue-tied *gaucherie* of Ministers, when contrasted with the effective diatribes of Bonaparte, created so general a prejudice against Great Britain as to preclude much hope of her finding an Ally. Consequently, she had to trust to the pressure of maritime warfare; and the course of the War was to reveal the slowness of such methods, when contrasted with the swift action of the Land Power, possessing the central position and nearly all the strategic points, from the Texel to the heel of Italy. The first events of the War, as Fox foretold, at once aggrandised the might of Napoleon. Having already massed a considerable force in the Dutch Netherlands, he launched it against Hanover, despite the Declaration of George III, as Elector and Prince of the Empire, on May 16th, that he would maintain strict neutrality. The Tsar, though guarantor of the Germanic System, offered no effective protest against the invasion of Hanover, and the King of Prussia, guarantor of the neutrality of Northern Germany, likewise maintained a prudent reserve, probably because he had been cajoled or coerced by General Duroc, despatched by Napoleon to Berlin in March, 1803. Hanover, therefore, was occupied without opposition by General Mortier. He concluded with the Duke of Cambridge, at

¹ *Memorials of C. J. Fox*, III. 372, 381, 384, 388, 391.

Suhlingen, a Capitulation, which George III refused to ratify. Mortier therefore, treated the Electorate as a conquered land. Its revenues were controlled by France and her troops were supported by the population. Napoleon, also, excluded British commerce from the north-western coast of Germany, which was, therefore, blockaded by the British fleet¹. The consequent stagnation of trade in Germany induced the Tsar to undertake a negotiation for a general settlement, on the basis of the evacuation by France of the Dutch Netherlands, Switzerland and all Italy (except Piedmont), Malta also being occupied for a time by Russian troops. To these proposals neither belligerent acceded, Napoleon deeming them excessive, while the British Government feared to place Malta as a pledge in Russian hands. There were some grounds for this mistrust. Alexander had taken the Republic of the Ionian Isles under his suzerainty and was now seeking to gain a foothold in Albania and the Morea. The designs of Napoleon were similar, but far wider, extending to the eventual partition of the Turkish dominions. At present, these schemes clashed. But what guarantee was there that, so soon as Malta was in Alexander's hands, he would not become an accessory to the designed partition?

In the Mediterranean, circumstances favoured Great Britain far more than in the North Sea. True, Napoleon marched a large force to hold the heel of Italy and menace Sicily, Corfu, the Morea and Egypt. But the menace was hollow, so long as a strong British fleet held that Sea. Conscious of the cardinal importance of Levantine interests, the Cabinet despatched to Malta a powerful fleet under Nelson. His Instructions, of date May 18th, 1803, bade him protect Malta, Naples, Sicily, the Ionian Isles and any part of the Turkish dominions that was threatened, while preventing Spanish warships from joining the French². It soon appeared that there was no immediate prospect of a Franco-Spanish Alliance; but Nelson was fully occupied in covering the Levant and watching the French in Toulon and southern Italy. Their designs on Corfu and the Morea caused general anxiety. The Porte, alarmed by French and Russian intrigues in Albania and the Morea, heard with much satisfaction of the arrival of Nelson's fleet at Malta; for its presence at that commanding port sufficed to sterilise the Oriental schemes of the two potentates. Fresh light was thrown on Russian designs by a letter which Pitt received from the young Earl of Aberdeen, dated Patras,

¹ Garden, VIII. 193; *Paget Papers*, II. 92; *Dropmore Papers*, VII. 151.

² Nicolas, V. 68; also V. 87, 107, 110, 166, 282.

still less that Francis, would draw the sword on behalf of the Bourbons or to avenge the Duc d'Enghien, as Gustavus IV of Sweden desired. In the previous winter, that monarch had received from Paris tempting offers for a Franco-Swedish alliance with a view to obtaining the use of the Swedish fleet for the invasion of England. In return for this help, Napoleon offered him Norway at the cost of Denmark, the latter Power to acquire Bremen and Verden. Prussia he tempted by the offer of Swedish Pomerania and part of Hanover¹. Gustavus, then on a lengthened tour in Germany, rejected these degrading proposals, and made repeated overtures to her leading States for a monarchical crusade. His eccentric behaviour and extravagant profession of faith did little to recommend the scheme.

The first signs of a *rapprochement* between Russia and Great Britain appeared early in 1804 owing to their alarm at the intrigues of Napoleon in Albania and the Morea. On March 9th, the Tsar's Foreign Minister, Prince Czartoryski, wrote to Vorontzoff, Russian Ambassador at London, expressing satisfaction at Great Britain's intention to oppose a French partition of the Ottoman Empire. On March 10th, Warren reported a similar resolve on the part of the Tsar. A Russian force had left Sevastopol for Corfu, and it was hoped that Great Britain would send troops to Malta to cooperate. Thus, out of the revival of the Eastern Question sprang the Anglo-Russian accord of 1804². It was furthered by sympathy with the dispossessed King of Sardinia and anxiety respecting the kingdom of Naples. Here, the royal authority existed on sufferance only. Soon after his rupture with Great Britain, Napoleon ordered French troops into Neapolitan territory in defiance of his Treaty of Florence with Ferdinand IV. Moreover, by occupying the heel of Italy the French threatened the Russians at Corfu and the anarchic western provinces of Turkey. British and Russian policy, therefore, began to converge on the object of expelling the French from southern Italy. Since Russia could do little in the Mediterranean without the protection of the British fleet, which needed Malta as base, Alexander ought to have acquiesced in Britain's occupation of that island, which he alone could not possibly hold against the French fleet. Naval considerations, therefore, should have led him to forego his claim to Malta; but, as will duly appear, he revived it, thereby nearly ruining the Anglo-Russian entente. Moreover, Russia's demands for subsidies were lofty, and on so vast a problem as the future settle-

¹ F.O. Austria, 73. C. Stuart to Hawkesbury, March 10th, 1804.

² Rose, *Third Coalition*, pp. viii-x.

ment of Europe there arose certain differences of opinion. During the summer of 1804 discussions proceeded satisfactorily, but, on October 10th, Harrowby wrote that Russia and Austria seemed not disinclined to join in schemes for a partition of Turkey which Napoleon was dangling before them¹. Accordingly, Russian overtures were scrutinised closely, especially when they were followed by a demand for the evacuation of Malta. Apparently, Alexander hoped that the increasing power of Napoleon and the growing difficulties of Great Britain would induce her to surrender that island.

The general situation was complicated by Napoleon's seizure of Sir George Rumbold, British Minister-resident in the Free City of Hamburg; and by the rupture between Great Britain and Spain. The former incident illustrates the methods of the Land Power, the latter those of the Sea Power. On the flimsy pretext that British Envoys on the Continent had conspired against him, Napoleon, on October 7th, ordered Fouché, Minister of Police, to prepare to carry off Rumbold from his residence on the river-front at Hamburg². On the 24th, the seizure was skilfully effected, and Rumbold, with all his papers, was hurried off to Paris. Not even the eagerness of Bonaparte and the guile of Fouché could detect signs of conspiracy in the papers. Moreover, the violation of the territory of a Free City, which was under the protection of the Tsar and the guardianship of Frederick William, constituted a challenge to both those potentates. The Prussian monarch, as Protector of the Circle of Lower Saxony, sent to Paris a pressing request for Rumbold's liberation, with which the French Emperor ungraciously complied³. The incident showed that the Corsican vendetta spirit, incarnate in Napoleon, would stoop to any outrage calculated to wreak revenge upon the hated islanders and drive them from the Continent.

The same month, however, witnessed a high-handed infraction of the law of nations by Great Britain at sea. True, she had grave cause of complaint against the Court of Madrid for its breaches of neutrality in the present conflict; but it could plead *force majeure*. By the Convention of October 19th, 1803, Spain had agreed to pay to Napoleon the yearly sum of 72,000,000 francs. Further, the *Aigle*, a French '74, had long been in harbour at Cadiz, and five French warships took refuge at Corunna, remaining in harbour for months, and necessitating the

¹ *Third Coalition*, p. 47.

² *Nap. Corr.* No. 8100.

³ G. Jackson, *Diaries*, I. 242-52; Malmesbury, *Diaries*, IV. 330-5; Hardenberg, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, II. 94 *et seq.*

gramme and left to subordinates its reduction to profitable practice. In any case, Novossiltzoff's mission bristled with difficulties. He had to humour the Anglophil Vorontzoff, and yet lower British maritime claims; to remould the Continent on ideal principles by means of a Coalition likely to prove distressingly worldly; and, if possible, to arrange for the peaceful demise of Turkey and the resurrection of Poland at the expense of the Tsar's expected Ally, Prussia. It is not surprising that Czartoryski finally declared that "Novossiltzoff did not execute the mission to our satisfaction¹."

His further statement that neither Pitt nor Vorontzoff approved all the Russian proposals is open to question; for there is documentary proof that Pitt acceded to the most important of them. Harrowby having been injured by an accident just after the preliminary interviews, Lord Mulgrave at the close of 1804 came to supervise affairs at the Foreign Office; but the negotiation for the Third Coalition needed the action, not of a *locum tenens*, but of the Prime-Minister. In a long Note of January 19th, 1805, to Novossiltzoff, the British Government declared its fundamental agreement with the generous designs of the Tsar for the deliverance of Europe and its future tranquillity. The basis of Anglo-Russian union should be the restriction of France within her former limits, the adoption in the liberated territories of measures calculated to ensure their peace and wellbeing and to constitute them a barrier against French aggrandisement; also to establish, at the peace, a guarantee for the safety of the different Powers and to reestablish in Europe a general system of Public Law. For the attainment of these great objects a general Coalition must be formed, including if possible Prussia. The Dutch and Swiss Republics, the kingdom of Sardinia, and Tuscany and Modena should be reestablished, while the other lands previously conquered or controlled by France must form part of the new Barrier System. For the same purpose, the Sardinian monarchy should be strengthened, and Austria and Prussia placed in strong positions over against France in Italy and near the Netherlands². The British Note made no reference to the vaguer topics named in Novossiltzoff's Instructions, nor did it mention Malta and the Maritime Code. Probably, he left them unnoticed in these his first interviews, and maintained a discreet silence concerning Czartoryski's favourite scheme for

¹ Czartoryski, *Memoirs*, chs. iv, v. The Grand-duke Mikhailovich (*L'Empereur Alexandre I*, i. 38) considers the Novossiltzoff mission the Tsar's first independent effort in diplomacy.

² C. K. Webster, *British Diplomacy* (1813-1815), App. 1.

absorbing the original kingdom of Prussia and pushing her westwards. Perhaps, Vorontzoff dissuaded him also from naming Austria's acquisition of Bavarian and Suabian territories, a notion always firmly opposed by George III and his Ministers.

Distinguishing the chimerical from the practical portions of the Russian programme, we may conclude that Pitt laid stress on the latter and kept them to the fore in the negotiations; also, that Malta and the Maritime Code were not at first mentioned; for, on or about January 19th, Novossiltzoff reported that the British Government entirely agreed with the proposals he had hitherto made, especially when he characterised them as designed to restore the Balance of Power. Pitt, after promising subsidies amounting to £5,000,000 to the Allies, declared that the aims of the two countries exactly coincided, as indicated by a comparison of the present proposals with those made by Pitt and Grenville to Russia in their Note of November 16th, 1798, outlining the programme for the Second Coalition. Perhaps the more practical portions of the Tsar's programme were inspired by that Note, which, in its turn, focussed Grenville's settlement suggested on December 22nd, 1795. There is a marked similarity between the British proposals of 1795, 1798, 1805 and

1814.¹ Novossiltzoff's caution in holding back some of the more contentious of the Russian demands probably arose from a desire not to complicate further an already tangled situation. As had happened at the close of 1799, when Great Britain was discussing with her Allies the terms of a possible pacification, so again now, early in 1805, Napoleon's New Year's offers of peace to George III². The King in his speech from the Throne, of January 15th, referred to them cautiously, but declined further discussion "without previous communication with those Powers on the Continent with whom I am engaged in confidential intercourse, and especially with the Emperor of Russia, who has given the strongest proofs of the wise and dignified sentiments with which he is animated, and of the warm interest which he takes in the safety and independence of Europe." This reply, like that of January, 1800, was calculated to reassure our friends that we should not lay down our arms without due consultation with them. Vorontzoff, in further interviews with Pitt, found him ready to concur in

¹ For the British draft treaties of January 21st and March 15th, 1805, see *Third Coalition*, pp. 90, 119.

² *Nap. Corr.* No. 8252. On the same day (January 2nd, 1805) he wrote to the King of Spain urging him to make war on England.

the Russian proposals for the settlement of Europe, but "quite decided not to give up Malta," and not to relax the British Maritime Code. In the month of May, a breakdown of the negotiation seemed inevitable, for Pitt, though deeply grieved at such an issue, would not give way, and intimated that Leveson-Gower's hands were tied on those two questions.

Meanwhile, on April 11th, 1805, that Ambassador had signed with Czartoryski a Treaty which, in the main, corresponded closely with a draft sent from London a month earlier. He met with several difficulties; for, though Novossiltzoff, on his return to Petrograd, gave a satisfactory account of British policy, yet Alexander and Czartoryski began to insist on modifications. They required that the King of Sardinia should acquire the Genoese Republic, to which Leveson-Gower demurred as harsh and unjust to its inhabitants. Then, they haggled over the conditions of the British subsidies, and demanded that Novossiltzoff, who was to go to Paris to present the Allied terms, should stipulate the revision of the Maritime Code by a Congress, also the evacuation of Malta by the British troops, and its occupation by Russian troops, in case Napoleon absolutely insisted on such a clause as a *sine qua non* of peace. The British Ambassador fought these two proposals and finally procured the abandonment of the former, the other being made conditional on the consent of the British Government, which of course, would not be forthcoming. Leveson-Gower counted the insertion of this proviso a diplomatic triumph; but he had not reckoned on the pertinacity of Alexander, who finally demanded the inclusion of the original demand. It met with an equally firm refusal at London, Mulgrave declaring, on June 5th, that Great Britain was ready to give up important conquests in the East and West Indies, but could not now surrender Malta, which protected the Levant and the kingdom of Naples. The island in British hands was a purely defensive station, but in those of France would be a constant menace to Sicily, southern Italy and the East¹. Moreover, in April, 1805, Great Britain had despatched about 7000 troops, under General Sir James Craig, to the Mediterranean over a sea not under her control²; while the Tsar was sending from Sevastopol and Corfu a larger force, under General Lacey (Lasci), which depended largely upon British transports. How Great Britain was to support these forces in southern Italy if she gave up Malta, was not explained by Alexander and his advisers.

¹ *Third Coalition*, pp. 127-40, 155.

² Gen. H. Bunbury, *The Great War*, pp. 181-97.

In a final effort to placate them, Pitt and Mulgrave consented to the eventual admission of a Russian garrison to Valetta, provided that the States bordering on France should be strengthened sufficiently to form a solid barrier against French aggression, and, also, that arrangements could be made with Spain for the cession of Minorca to Great Britain in place of Malta. This last provision found definite expression in Mulgrave's despatch of June 7th, while Pitt, in a majestic survey of the services of Great Britain to the common cause, set forth cogent reasons why the transfer of Malta to Russia would not strengthen her efforts. Yet, very reluctantly, he consented to accept some other station in the Mediterranean, provided that Sardinia were greatly strengthened, that Switzerland gained entire independence, and that Prussia acquired Luxemburg and the country between the Moselle, Rhine and Meuse, so as to interpose a strong military barrier between France and the Dutch Netherlands¹. The scheme adumbrates that which came about in 1814.

Long before the British despatches of June 5th and 7th reached Petrograd, Novossiltzoff had left for Berlin, *en route* for Paris². The situation accordingly was complex and obscure. Ostensibly, he was about to offer to Napoleon, in answer to his New Year's appeal, the Anglo-Russian terms for a general pacification; but the two Powers disagreed on important topics; and their disagreement could hardly escape his eager scrutiny. We now know that Napoleon was resolved not to listen to Russia's mediation³.

Indeed, during his Italian tour of the early summer of 1805, his deeds and writings betrayed supreme contempt for the other Powers. A prey to megalomania, he expressed complete belief in the success of his schemes for the invasion of England or Ireland, adding that, as a result, "the Indies are ours when we want to take them." He scoffed at the Anglo-Russian negotiations and ridiculed the notion that another Coalition could be formed⁴. Yet he took the steps that were best calculated to provoke it. First, he declared himself King of Italy—a signal infraction of the Treaty of Lunéville—and, soon afterwards, he framed the daring plan of annexing to France the Ligurian or Genoese Republic, which he carried into effect on June 4th⁵. This

¹ *Third Coalition*, pp. 165-74; Corbett, *Campaign of Trafalgar*, App. A. The Minorca proposal has been overlooked by Sorel (vi. 417) and most writers.

² He left Petrograd on June 11th and reached Berlin on June 23rd (G. Jackson, *Diaries*, i. 300).

³ *Lettres inédites de Talleyrand*, p. 121.

⁴ *Nap. Corr.*, Nos. 8788-92, 8807, 8813.

⁵ E. Driault, *Austerlitz*, p. 179.

coup de foudre at once cleared away the murk that hung over the Continent. The timid acquiescence of Francis in threats that came from Paris, and his peevish exaggeration of trifling differences with the Courts of London and Petrograd, gave place to a secret resolve to end the humiliating subservience to France.

Even more marked was the change in the Tsar. Annoyance at the stiff resistance of Pitt was overborne by fierce resentment at the rapacity of Napoleon; and he sent off Instructions to Novossiltzoff at Berlin, to return to the Prussian officials the French passports which they had procured for him and to break off the overture to Napoleon. The Envoy, in doing so on July 10th, informed Hardenberg that the French annexation of Genoa and the manner of its accomplishment ended all hopes of peace. He, also, wrote to Vorontzoff at London, stating that the selfishness and isolation of Prussia precluded all hope of assistance from her, but that Austrian troops would be ready to march westwards by the middle of August. As for the North-Germans, they now saw that Napoleon was "no angel but a devil," ready to swallow Germany if she remained inactive. At Petrograd, also, after a final protest on the Maltese affair, Czartoryski consented to shelve both it and the Malta-Minorca exchange proposal. Accordingly on July 28th, the Anglo-Russian Treaty of April 11th was ratified, the former article respecting Malta being omitted. On August 9th, Stadion, the Austrian Ambassador, signified secretly the accession of Francis II to that Treaty¹. Thus, within nine weeks the Genoese incident brought about the formation of a Coalition which British diplomacy had failed to effect during twenty-six months.

The Treaty of April 11th, 1805, forms the first official attempt at reestablishing the European System on firm and just foundations. Its main object is to form a General League of European States in order to restrict France within her ancient borders, and restore the Balance of Power on the territorial basis noted above, so as to "guarantee the safety and independence of the different States and oppose a solid barrier to future usurpations." For this purpose, Great Britain will Mearly her sea and land forces and her transports where necessary, and sending her Allies throughout the War by subsidies at the yearly rate (Lasci), w1,000 for each body of 100,000 regular troops, also by pre-Britain was bsidies. The Allies agree not to lay down their arms before Malta, was not of a General Peace. Ten separate articles provide for

¹ *TM*, pp. 189-97, App. I, II; *Paget Papers*, II. 186; G. Jackson,

² Gen.

the accession of "the Emperor of Germany" and the King of Sweden, if they will act against France within four months; also of Prussia and Denmark; the addition of the Belgic Provinces to the Dutch Republic, and of Geneva (then French) to the Swiss; the furnishing of 250,000 troops by Austria and 115,000 (finally increased to 180,000) by Russia, "besides levies raised by her in Albania, Greece, etc." other contingents raising the total to 500,000 men; also, the accession of Spain and Portugal, Great Britain using Russia's mediation to make peace with, and win over, Spain. By the sixth and seventh separate articles the Allies bind themselves not to interfere with the desire of the French respecting the form of government, or with that of other countries where their armies shall act, not to appropriate to themselves conquests made before the Peace, but on its conclusion to assemble a Congress to discuss and fix the bases of International Law. They also assign to Prussia, in case she joins them, her former lands west of the Rhine, with an addition "more or less great," which will extend her dominions to the French frontier on the side of the Belgic Provinces (Cologne and Juliers are implied). By a separate and secret article they agree to respect the agrarian settlement effected by the French Revolution, and state that, though monarchy will best assure the repose of France and of Europe, they will seek its restoration by spreading that conviction in France, not by a preliminary and formal proclamation. They leave the Dutch and Swiss free to choose their Governments, but will see with pleasure the choice of the House of Orange by the former, and will advise the King of Sardinia to grant to his people suitable institutions. They also express the hope that a System of International Law may be "guaranteed by general assent and by the establishment in Europe of a federal system assuring the independence of weak States and presenting a formidable barrier against the ambition of the stronger."

The proposals for the assembly of a Congress for the redaction of principles of International Law and the foundation of a European Federal System were due to the generous initiative of Alexander; but, according to the testimony of Czartoryski, Mulgrave and Leveson-Gower, they met with complete sympathy and support from the British Government. The statement just quoted respecting the French monarchy also accords with Pitt's earlier declarations; and, but for some trace of resentment in Alexander's mind about Malta and Maritime Law, the agreement between the British and Russian Governments was complete. By insisting on the differences between the British

draft treaty of March 15th, 1805, and the elaborate document that we have now summarised, Thiers and other historians have been led to expatiate on the distinction between the generous spirit of Alexander and the narrowly insular aims of Great Britain. That distinction is overdrawn. The early drafts of a compact generally differ greatly from its final form; and the British Foreign Office was not accustomed to insert ideal aspirations in its treaties. Moreover, in this case it sought to provide primarily for the establishment of peace and security. But popular liberties were also to be safeguarded and, as we have seen, Leveson-Gower championed those of Liguria against Czartoryski. There is, also, good reason for thinking that, except in regard to Maritime Law, Pitt and his colleagues did not fall short of Alexander in desiring the foundation of an International System. Where they differed was in facility of expression.

To root ideas in actuality is the test of statesmanship. The task was peculiarly difficult in the year 1805. Great Britain could act only through the slow and indirect method of maritime blockade. Russia could act only by means of the territories of Austria or Prussia, the latter of whom clung to a profitable neutrality, while the former was a prey to poverty, nervousness and divided counsels. The Habsburg Power joined the Allies under the impulse of the news from Genoa, which yielded one more proof that peace with Napoleon was more dangerous than war. Towards Paget, the British Ambassador, the Court of Vienna maintained extreme reserve, and, perhaps for the sake of secrecy, it conducted all its negotiations with us at Petrograd, finally, after much insistence, securing the offer of an initial subsidy. The Chancellor, Count Lewis von Cobenzl, entreated that negotiations with France might be kept up to the last so as to avert the danger of an attack from Napoleon before the Russians arrived. Yet Austria's plan of campaign, first sketched in outline on July 19th, erred in two important respects. Believing Napoleon to be absorbed in his scheme of invading England, the *Hofkriegsrath* assigned to the chief army under Arch-duke Charles the operations in North Italy; while General Mack, with whom he was on bad terms, was to advance with a smaller force into Bavaria. Still more serious was the miscalculation as to time, 80 days being reckoned as the minimum within which Napoleon's Grand Army could march from Boulogne to the Upper Danube, and 60 days for the Russian army cantoned near the Galician border to arrive in support of Mack. The latter calculation was nearly correct; the former was too long by three weeks; and in that error lay the chief

cause of the disaster of Ulm which struck the Third Coalition to the heart¹.

Other causes, however, contributed to this event. Austria counted on the aid of the Elector of Bavaria, but wrongly; for, after dissembling his intentions, he joined Napoleon so soon as the vanguard of the Grand Army appeared on the River Main. Consequently, the Allies were unexpectedly weak at their centre; and it soon appeared that they had spent too much strength on enveloping moves at their extreme right and left. Russia and Great Britain sent large contingents into northern Germany. After wearisome negotiations with Sweden concerning the choice of Stralsund in Swedish Pomerania as base², an Anglo-Russo-Swedish force began to assemble on the lower Elbe, much to the annoyance of Frederick William, who, besides being on the worst of terms with Gustavus, regarded Hanover as his by reversion. Pitt and Mulgrave, hoping to bribe Prussia into active support of this expedition, expected that in the spring of 1806, at the least, 250,000 Allies would sweep the French from the Netherlands and attack France through the northern plain—a dream cherished in 1794 and 1799, but not destined to fulfilment until 1814.

Nor was this all. The Anglo-Russian expedition destined for southern Italy was to assist in driving the French from the Peninsula. As a political move the plan had some merit; but on naval and military grounds it was open to censure. For it was clear that, if (as sound strategy required) Napoleon recalled his troops from the heel of Italy in order to concentrate in her northern plain, the expedition would merely beat the air. This is what happened—and not only in south-eastern Italy, but also in Hanover. Recalling his troops from those extremities, the great captain massed them in central positions where they would act with telling effect. Thus, as happened in the case of all the Coalitions, France opposed swift concentration to the enveloping and ill concerted movements of Allies, who greatly outnumbered her except at the one essential point.

The danger of Austria succumbing before the arrival of Russian succours ought to have stirred Prussia to prompt action. This the British Government sought to assure. So soon as Napoleon's moves towards the Danube were fully ascertained, it despatched Harrowby on a special mission to Berlin, for the purpose of bringing that Court, and if possible those of Denmark, Saxony and Hesse-Cassel, into line

¹ *Third Coalition*, pp. 190, 283.

² Koch and Schöll, II. 366, 370.

against France. Alopeus, Prussian Ambassador in London, had already been sounding the Pitt Administration about pecuniary help; and, on October 27th, Mulgrave instructed Harrowby to offer Prussia £2,500,000 a year in subsidies for the support of 200,000 men in active service, the purpose being to drive the French from the Dutch Republic and to protect Dutch and North German territory during the war. In order to complete the Barrier system, the Belgic Provinces were to be offered to Prussia, intermediate districts between them and her present domains being added, so as to facilitate her communications with this new territory. These offers were subject to the approval of the Tsar and his representative at Berlin, who would also discuss with Harrowby the additions to Austria's territories, if she manifested jealousy at Prussia's proposed acquisitions. Great Britain, for her part, while vetoing all discussion of her Maritime Code, was prepared to forego her colonial gains except Malta and the Cape of Good Hope¹.

The choice of Harrowby for so difficult a mission is unaccountable; for his accident had shaken a constitution naturally infirm; and Jackson, with a spice of jealousy, pronounced him a peevish invalid, often incapacitated by fits and incapable even of ordinary duties². He arrived at Berlin on November 16th, a stranger to its intrigues, and needing constant instruction from Jackson, whom for the time he superseded. The situation at that capital was highly critical. The Tsar had arrived there three weeks earlier, for the purpose of gaining permission (hitherto firmly refused) for his troops to enter Prussian territory. In this he now succeeded, thanks to the effrontery of the French in violating the principality of Ansbach (ceded to Prussia in 1791). Under the sting of this insult, Frederick William seemed inclined to act with vigour against France. He allowed the Russians to enter his territory and entered into friendly discussions with Alexander as to cooperation with the Allies, in case Napoleon should refuse to accept the armed mediation of Prussia. Meanwhile, the French having evacuated Hanover, in order to concentrate against Mack, he ordered a Prussian force to occupy that Electorate. The news followed of the surrender of practically the whole of Mack's army at and near Ulm. It clinched the predominance of Prussia, and enabled her to raise her terms, while the Tsar felt bound to humour her, in order to ensure speedy and vigorous action against Napoleon's flank or rear.

These circumstances explain the conditions which Prussia virtually

¹ *Third Coalition*, pp. 207-20.

² G. Jackson, *Diaries*, I. 377; Rose, *Pitt*, p. 545, Pt II.

dictated to the Tsar in the Secret Treaty of Potsdam (November 3rd, 1805). With 180,000 troops, she would join the Allies, if within four weeks Napoleon should refuse her terms for a general settlement on the following lines: for France, the boundaries of the Peace of Lunéville (*i.e.* "the natural frontiers," with the exception of the south of the Dutch Netherlands); an indemnity for the King of Sardinia at the expense of the "kingdom of Italy" (a clause which implied the retention of Piedmont by France); the withdrawal of French troops from Germany, the Dutch and Swiss republics and Naples; the independence of the kingdom of Lombardy; the line of the Mincio, with Mantua, for Austria in northern Italy; and a surer frontier for Prussia. One or two phrases pointed to a more rigid restriction of French power, should Fortune favour the Allies. But the sting of the Treaty lay in the first secret article, which stipulated Prussia's eventual acquisition of Hanover either by exchange or other arrangement. For the attainment of this object the Tsar promised, very reluctantly, to use his good offices. As for the exchange, Prussia's principality of East-Frisia was named; and Hardenberg (who disliked the whole proposal) spoke of the possible acquisition by the House of Brunswick of Upper Gelderland and Juliers—the latter of which Harrowby was about to offer to Prussia¹.

These last proposals were kept secret from Harrowby; but a Russian Special Envoy, d'Oubril, was charged to present the whole Treaty to the British Government. Its disclosure came as a shock to Pitt and Mulgrave. That Prussia should angle after Hanover was not surprising, though their offers to her (if in time) might have caused some sense of shame at her present demand; but that the Tsar should, however reluctantly, support a scheme for despoiling his Ally to benefit a calculating trimmer, passed belief. The proposal was made shortly after the news of Trafalgar had sent a thrill of sorrow but also of exultation through these islands. Well, therefore, might Pitt remark to Vorontzoff that, if England had been beaten at sea and compelled to sign a separate peace, such a proposal would have been out of the question. He refrained from so much as naming it to the King, for fear of killing him or driving him mad. Vorontzoff regarded it "with inexpressible astonishment" and begged that he might be spared the

¹ Hansing, *Hardenberg und die dritte Coalition, ad fin.*; H. Ulmann, *Russisch-preussische Politik* (1801-6), pp. 237, 270-2; Hardenberg, *Denkwürdigkeiten* (II, p. 353) stated that Harrowby offered the Dutch Netherlands to Prussia; but he offered "such acquisitions on the side of Holland and the Low Countries" as would strengthen her influence upon them (*Third Coalition*, pp. 226, 227).

Powers to accord. For a short space after the Ansbach incident, a union of the four Great Powers appeared to be near at hand; and if Hardenberg had been sovereign of Prussia, her splendid army, launched against Napoleon's rear, might have altered the course of history. But short-sighted selfishness then dictated her policy; and the Coalition, strong at the wings but weak at the centre, reeled under the home-thrust of a master of war whose expansive policy in time of peace had not yet betrayed him into a diffuse and ineffective strategy. Eight years were to pass before adversity grouped them in a compact phalanx, and prosperity relaxed his grip on both political and military combinations.

III

The Pitt Administration was succeeded by an ill-assorted union of the Grenvilles with Foxites and Addingtonians, soon to be dubbed "the Ministry of all the Talents." Lord Grenville became First Lord of the Treasury, and in September, 1806, his brother Thomas succeeded Grey at the Admiralty; Fox took the Foreign Office; Spencer, Home Affairs, and Windham the War and Colonial Office. Addington (now Lord Sidmouth) became Lord Privy Seal, and, in October, 1806, Lord President. The Grenville Ministry, as it should be called, carried the Abolition of the Slave Trade, and some other useful measures of late postponed by Pitt. But its *raison d'être* was, first, opposition to his policy of European Coalitions, and, second, the conclusion of peace, if it could be secured without too great sacrifices. Accordingly, Ministers sought to withdraw from Continental entanglements and to embark on a more purely British policy. Trafalgar, Austerlitz and the defection of Prussia pointed the moral of the situation. The three Coalitions against France, sapped by mutual distrust and jealousy, had served but to aggrandise her power. Thanks to the First Coalition, she had acquired "the natural frontiers" together with a firm control over the United Netherlands and northern Italy. The Second Coalition yielded to her Piedmont and the hegemony of Switzerland. And now, the pitiful collapse of the Austro-Russian defence enabled her to acquire from the Habsburgs eastern Venetia, Istria, and Dalmatia, to drive them out of Germany and exalt their rivals, Prussia and Bavaria. Well might Napoleon defy Great Britain to attempt to form yet another Coalition¹.

¹ *Nap. Corr.* 9929.

The diffuse efforts of the Allies against southern Italy and Hanover were now speedily reversed. Napoleon's swift centripetal moves from those outlying parts having won decisive triumphs in the valleys of the Danube and the Po, he now prepared to reoccupy southern Italy and to make profitable use of Hanover in the hitherto unratified compact with Prussia. In both cases, as also in the crushing terms imposed on Austria, there appears the new *Leitmotif* of his policy, his "coast-system," soon to be re-named the Continental System. A note of eagerness pervades all his references, early in the year 1806, to southern Italy and Sicily. As Ferdinand IV and Maria Carolina had thrown off the mask of neutrality and admitted the Anglo-Russian expedition, he now accused them of perfidy, declared them deposed, and ordered Masséna and Joseph Bonaparte with a large French force to drive the Allies into the sea. "Above all do not lose a moment in trying to capture Sicily¹." The Crown of the Two Sicilies was held out as the prize for Joseph. On the collapse of the Neapolitan defence, General Craig determined to embark for Sicily, which his original Instructions pointed out as far more important than Naples; and, despite the clamour of Maria Carolina and the representations of our Ambassador, Hugh Elliot, he withdrew the British force to Messina. Lacey also retired with his Russians to Corfu. The King, Queen and H. Elliot sought refuge at Palermo, where General Acton (latterly out of favour) resumed his position as Chief Minister. There can be little doubt that Craig's prompt withdrawal and the measures taken by Collingwood to protect the Bourbons at Palermo saved Sicily from French domination. The Sicilians detested the Bourbons and longed for British rule, a fact which partly explains the tortuous intrigues of Maria Carolina against our officials in Sicily. A British victory at Maida in Calabria (July, 1806) averted all danger of a speedy French conquest of that island².

Though Great Britain thus retained in the Mediterranean two islands which prevented Napoleon's domination of that sea—but *principal de ma politique*—yet on the coast of the North Sea he achieved over her a bloodless triumph, the fruit of his masterly bargainings with Prussia. That Power, having occupied Hanover and assured the ignominious retirement of the Anglo-Russian forces, demobilised, as though peace were secure. Never was there a worse blunder. Napoleon,

¹ *Nap. Corr.* 9781, 9788.

² Bunbury, *The Great War with France*, pp. 210-56, 415-36; Collingwood, *Memoirs*, 183-96; *Diary of Sir John Moore*, II. ch. xxii.

the Peace of Amiens, not to this or that article, but to his refusal to conclude with Great Britain a treaty of commerce such as would harm French industries; that she must give up all thought of interfering in French arrangements (presumably those relating to commerce); that she was a great Sea Power, while France was a great Land Power; therefore, the participation of another Land Power (Russia) would be unfair, and he would never place himself, as regards Continental affairs, at the discretion of Great Britain and that of Russia operating conjointly.

This reply augured ill for an accommodation. Under the specious plea that Great Britain and France were equal in strength on their respective elements and therefore must meet each other alone, Napoleon was about to eliminate our Ally from the negotiation which Fox had declared must proceed conjointly with her, or not at all. Besides, it was certain that Napoleon would bring in his Spanish, Italian and Dutch Allies; otherwise the peace would be partial. Accordingly, Great Britain must, in honour, include Russia and Sweden in the negotiations. Such was the purport of Fox's answer on April 8th; and he further stated that, while deeming a treaty of commerce advantageous to both countries, he would postpone it as a matter for future arrangement. Napoleon, however, absolutely declined to discuss matters with the Coalition and insisted on treating with Great Britain alone. To this demand Fox, on April 21st, sent a firm refusal, repeating it on June 14th, with the expression of a hope that the negotiation might secure the tranquillity of Europe. Meanwhile, Talleyrand had sent for the Earl of Yarmouth, who was then at the dépôt for British prisoners at Verdun, and proposed through him to make secret communications to Fox¹. With this proposal Fox concurred. Talleyrand, therefore, when pressed by Yarmouth, stated that Napoleon would make no difficulty about the restitution of Hanover by Prussia to George III. As for the Bourbons and Sicily, "*vous l'avez; nous ne vous la demandons pas.*" Asked whether France would guarantee the integrity of the Ottoman empire, he replied in the affirmative; but it must be soon; for "*beaucoup se prépare, mais rien n'est fait.*"

The hint gained in significance from the weekly extensions of Napoleon's authority. After aggrandising his South-German Allies and proclaiming Joseph Bonaparte King of Naples, the Emperor

¹ Francis Seymour, Earl of Yarmouth and second Marquis of Hertford (1743-1822), sat in Parliament from 1766 to 1794, and was Plenipotentiary to Berlin and Vienna in 1794 (see ch. II). The despatches summarised above are in *Parl. Papers* (December 22nd, 1806). See, too, *Ann. Reg.* (1806), pp. 708-91.

declared his brother Lewis King of Holland, a project dating from March 8th, 1806, and carried into effect on June 5th. On the same day, he appropriated the Papal enclaves of Benevento and Pontecorvo, assigning them as dukedoms to Talleyrand and Bernadotte¹. Meanwhile, he was pressing on with his German lieges the scheme of the Confederation of the Rhine; and on July 12th he secretly signed with the Kings of Bavaria and Würtemberg, and certain lesser Princes, a 'Treaty to that effect'². For the present, he concealed it, probably in the hope of inducing Great Britain and Russia to sign separate treaties of peace before they heard of this revolutionary change in Central Europe. Thus, partly by intimidation, partly by secret diplomacy, he intended to separate his opponents and compel them to surrender at discretion.

His intentions appear clearly in his Correspondence. On May 31st he writes to Talleyrand, complaining that the extreme weakness of Prussia leaves him little hope that she will assist him in compelling England to make peace. She will not even close the Sound to British ships. Therefore, he must go on with the British negotiation and look about for some other lands to grant to Prussia, in case she has to give back Hanover to George III. Some domain of 300,000 inhabitants, say, Hesse-Cassel, will do for her. Further, he urges King Joseph to prepare to seize Sicily; for peace will be made with the British when that island is secured. By July 4th, he decides never to allow Great Britain to keep Malta and maintain control over Sicily; for this would form an "impassable barrier" to French communications with the Adriatic and the Levant. She must therefore give up either Malta or Sicily; and in either case, he will humour her about Hanover. Similarly, he will grant a separate peace to Russia, reluctantly leaving Corfu to her³. These letters explain why neither Great Britain nor Russia could make peace with him, and why Prussia broke with him. For the present, his divulsive plans prospered. The Russian Plenipotentiary, d'Oubril, who arrived at Paris on July 6th, was so dazzled by his splendour, or cowed by his threats, as to sign with Talleyrand a separate Treaty, a secret article of which stipulated the cession of Sicily to King Joseph, Ferdinand IV receiving from Spain the Balearic Isles

¹ *Nap. Corr.* 9944, 10314, 10316.

² H. A. L. Fisher, *Napoleonic Statesmanship: Germany*, ch. vi; E. Driault, *Austerlitz*, pp. 376-88. On August 6th, Francis II abdicated as Head of the Holy Roman Empire; and that venerable organism expired.

³ *Nap. Corr.* Nos. 10396, 10409, 10416, 10443, 10477. For Gentz's comments on the negotiations of 1806, see Sir R. Adair, *Minister to Vienna, and gen.*

for his son Francis, the former Prince Royal (July 20th). Believing that he had saved Germany from the projected Napoleonic League and Austria from ruin, d'Oubril hurried back to Petrograd, there to meet with an indignant reception by his master, who repudiated this degrading compact.

Yet Napoleon had won a respite of some weeks, and had for the time separated the Allies. He now turned against Great Britain resolved to wrest Sicily from her at all costs: witness the last sentence of his letter of August 6th to King Joseph—"Peace or war, you shall have Sicily¹." Accordingly, his Plenipotentiary, General Clarke declared to Yarmouth that, since France had gained a signal success by separating the Allies, she must now raise her terms. Yarmouth being so indiscreet as to produce his full powers for treating in regular form, the negotiation promised to be short. But Fox, rebuking Yarmouth for this lapse, sent out to Paris a statesman known for his pacific views, the Earl of Lauderdale, to assist him and finally to take over his duties.

The conferences with Clarke during the month of August revealed the hopelessness of coming to an accord. Napoleon now scornfully rejected the original basis of *uti possidetis*, which implied Great Britain's retention of St Lucia, Tobago, the Cape and Surinam. True, early in September, on hearing that Alexander I refused to ratify the Oubril compact, he seemed inclined to lower his tone. But now, as ever, the crux was Sicily. The principle of good faith to our Neapolitan Ally and the dictates of naval strategy alike forbade the surrender of that island to Joseph Bonaparte. Moreover, Fox is said to have attached great importance to the maintenance of British power in the Mediterranean². Unfortunately, early in August, he fell seriously ill of the dropsy. The symptoms, perhaps, were aggravated by despair at the unfavourable turn of the negotiation. When his nephew, Lord Holland, ventured to suggest that, after all, some indemnity might be found for the Bourbons in lieu of Sicily, he replied: "It is not so much the value of the point in dispute as the manner in which the French fly from their word that disheartens me. It is not Sicily, but the shuffling, insincere way in which they act that shows me they are playing a false game; and in that case it would be very imprudent to make any concessions which by possibility could be thought inconsistent with our honour, or could

¹ *Nap. Corr.* 10657.

² Lord Holland, *Memoirs of the Whig Party*, II. 340; also, *Ann. Reg.* (1806), ch. IX, which is by him.

furnish our Allies with a plausible pretence for suspecting, reproaching or deserting us¹."

Fox died on September 13th. French writers have often represented that event as the chief cause for the breakdown of the negotiation, asserting that Fox's colleagues and Lauderdale were less peaceably inclined than the deceased statesman. Such assertions are at variance with the evidence. Holland, who knew both Fox and his colleagues, believed that no difference of opinion occurred between him and them on this head, and that his death made no difference to the issue of the negotiation. Further, with one immaterial exception, the despatches sent to Lauderdale after that event deviated neither in matter nor in tone from those of March–August 23rd. Moreover, Lauderdale continued to make every possible effort to bring about an honourable peace, for which since the year 1793 he had consistently striven². He remained at Paris until October 6th; but in vain. On September 24th, Napoleon left St Cloud to direct the War to which his insolent treatment of Prussia had now driven her long-suffering monarch³. The Instructions left behind for Champagny precluded all hope, either of a joint negotiation with Great Britain and Russia or of the retention of Sicily by the Neapolitan Bourbons. On September 25th, the French Plenipotentiary offered to Great Britain the Cape, Malta, Hanover, Tobago and the French settlements in India; but he insisted on the cession of Sicily, the Bourbons receiving the Balearic Isles and an annuity from the Court of Spain. As these cynical terms were Napoleon's ultimatum, the negotiation lapsed.

Thus, Sicily was the chief cause of the prolongation of the War, as Malta had been of its inception. At this point, as at all important crises since November, 1792, the Franco-British dispute turned essentially on questions of naval strategy. On the surface, there appear in 1793, 1797, 1803, 1806 altercations respecting the Scheldt, Gibraltar, Malta, Sicily. What was really at stake was the French control of the Dutch Netherlands and mastery of the Mediterranean. A sure instinct impelled even peace-loving Ministers to hold out firmly on matters that concerned, first, the safety of the East Coast and, finally, the communications with India. For the present, Great Britain had to

¹ *Corr. of C. J. Fox*, iv. 476. Sir Robert Adair, *Mission to Vienna* (Introd.) refutes the assertions of Bignon that Fox had offered to cede Sicily; but the slander has been widely accepted.

² Holland, *Memoirs of the Whig Party*, II. 76–81, 346–52.

³ The chief cause of the rupture was Hanover (Garden, x. 153). See, too, G. Jackson, *Diaries*, II. 12–14, 501–11.

acquiesce in French control of Dutch territory; but she reduced the danger by occupying the Cape; and Napoleon's Levantine schemes now warned her to hold on both to Malta and Sicily.

He revenged himself by overthrowing Prussia. So swift were his moves that neither Russia nor Great Britain could help her, Austria, who could have done so, remembered Prussia's inaction of the year before¹. Consequently, this second phase of the Third Coalition corresponds closely to the first. Prussia takes the place of Austria. Her main army having been utterly beaten at Jena-Auerstädt (October 14th), the survivors scatter eastwards; not until February, 1807, do the Russo-Prussian forces make a determined stand, at Eylau; and not until April 26th is the revived Coalition placed on a firm basis by the Treaty of Bartenstein between those Powers. To this Treaty Great Britain (who had made peace with Prussia) soon acceded, offering a subsidy of £1,000,000 on June 27th, a fortnight after the Russians were utterly overthrown in the battle of Friedland. So halting had been the moves of the Allies, whereby they threw away the few chances left open to them by the perfervid genius of Napoleon.

The sole interest attaching to Great Britain's policy in these gloomy months belongs, not to her dilatory diplomacy, but to the development of the elemental struggle between her and Napoleon. On November 21st, three weeks after his triumphal entry into Berlin, he issued thence his famous Decree, declaring the British Isles in a state of blockade, and all commerce and communication with them forbidden, all British subjects in French or Allied lands subject to imprisonment and all British property good prize, the half of it being used to indemnify merchants for the losses inflicted by British cruisers. The preamble justifies this measure by a recital of the harsh British customs which enjoined the capture of the crews and cargoes of hostile merchantmen, the blockade of non-fortified harbours, the practice of nominal blockade, even over an entire coast, and, in fine, of all her measures calculated to ruin the trade of the Continent. All Napoleon's Allies are ordered strictly to carry out this Decree, so that a cordon may be drawn against the Islanders, from the Elbe to the south of Italy. The King of Holland is urged to great activity in enforcing this Decree—"the sole means of striking home at England and compelling her to peace"—also, to build 25 sail of the line, so that in four or five years Napoleon and his Allies may challenge her maritime supremacy².

¹ Adair, *Mission to Vienna*, p. 142.

² *Nap. Corr.* 11283, 11377, 11378.

Such, then, was the Emperor's policy—to utilise the resources of all lands under his control, to close them to British commerce, and finally to mass their fleets for the utter overthrow of the Island Power. The construction of warships which he now pressed on in Dutch, French, Spanish and Italian ports furnished a telling commentary on this Decree. Commercial war was to prepare for political destruction. The programme was merely a gigantic development of ideas set forth by the French Jacobins. The Report of January 1st, 1793, to the French Convention insisted on the artificiality of the British Empire and the facility with which it might be attacked in so many quarters as to ensure the ruin of British credit. This notion inspired Bonaparte in his Egyptian Expedition. And now, that avenue being closed by the British occupation of Malta and Sicily, he expanded the alternative scheme; named in his letter of February 23rd, 1798, of seizing the north-western coast of Germany, the probable sequel being the inclusion of Prussia and Austria in his "coast-system."

His plan of commercial warfare against Great Britain having its roots far in the past, we need not take very seriously the diatribes against her maritime tyranny in the preamble to the Berlin Decree. But her proceedings at sea had aroused much discontent among neutrals, especially in the United States. Already, President Jefferson, in his official Message of December 3rd, 1805, had protested against the depredations of privateers on United States and other shipping even close to their ports, declaring that he had armed light squadrons to capture the offenders and have them tried as pirates. He, also, referred to captures made by warships contrary to the Law of Nations, and declared that neutrals had as good a right as belligerents to decide what was legitimate trade for a neutral to carry on with belligerents. Equally obnoxious to him was the custom whereby "a belligerent takes to itself a commerce with its own enemy which it denies to a neutral." Probably, he was referring either to the Licence system then commencing, or to the Rule of 1756, cited above. But his charges were vague, Great Britain not being named. He named her, however, in his Message of January 17th, 1806, as infringing the terms of the Jay Treaty of 1794-5, and as impressing seamen from United States shipping. That practice and the right of search which it involved was certainly productive of infinite friction¹. In April, 1806, Congress passed a Non-Importation Act, prohibiting the import of many British products. It came into force on November 15th, but, owing to the

¹ See *Camb. Mod. Hist.*, vii. 327-31.

clamour against it, was soon withdrawn. Negotiations were then on foot between Washington and London, and, in December, Jefferson announced that they were "proceeding in a spirit of friendship and accommodation which promises a mutual advantage¹." The blighting of these hopes resulted from the Berlin Decree and the retaliation to which the British Government resorted.

The first retort to that drastic measure took the form of the British Order in Council of January 7th, 1807, which, while asserting the inherent justice of retaliating by the prohibition of all maritime trade with France, such as she threatened to apply to the British Isles, yet restricted such punitive measures to vessels trading between any two ports whence British ships were excluded. It therefore aimed at stopping all trade, even that of neutrals, from harbour to harbour (except in Portugal) between Hamburg and Venice. Inasmuch as British cruisers now swept the seas, neutral trade probably suffered more from the thorough application of this limited measure than from the Emperor's *brutum fulmen* of a blockade of the British Isles. In truth, he must have resorted to that bombastic declaration chiefly as a means of intimidation and of spurring on his antagonist to reprisals certain to arouse the wrath of neutrals. In this, as will shortly appear, he succeeded.

The month of February, 1807, witnessed the failure of the Sea Power to help Russia. Driven from Warsaw by the pressure of Napoleon's arms, she was now threatened by her secular rivals, the Turks. General Sebastiani, French Ambassador at Constantinople, having induced the Porte to declare war on Russia (December 24th, 1806), the British Government ordered a squadron to force the Straits and compel the Turks to make peace. Vice-Admiral Sir James Duckworth with seven sail arrived at Princes Islands, near Constantinople, on February 20th, 1807. The wind failing, he anchored there and then weakly complied with the request of the British Ambassador, Charles Arbuthnot, now on board, that he should seek to end the Russo-Turkish War by peaceful negotiation. Thereupon, the Turks amused him with specious offers, until their preparations were complete both on the spot and at the Dardanelles. Then they defied him, and he, realising his helplessness, ran for the Straits, passing the repaired forts with considerable loss. Subsequently, the Russian squadron which should have aided him hove in sight. War with Turkey having arisen out of our futile effort to help Russia, the British squadron

¹ *Ann. Reg.* (1807), p. 679.

proceeded to Alexandria, where the operations on land completely miscarried¹. Altogether, the naval and military policy of the Fox-Grenville Ministry proved a disastrous failure. From Trafalgar to the Dardanelles was a plunge from the sublime to the ridiculous.

The conviction gained ground that "All the Talents" had frittered away the national resources on distant and difficult enterprises, when they should have struck at France. Deprived as she was, for seven or eight months, of the presence of Napoleon and the Grand Army, then in Prussia or Poland, she presented a good target². But the genius of Chatham appealed in vain to Grenville, Fox and Howick; and their dull, unenterprising régime sensibly contributed to the overthrow of the Third Coalition. In March, 1807, Great Britain had, exclusive of artillery, 259,000 men under arms. Of these, 93,000 were serving abroad, while 165,000 Regulars and Militia were in these islands, without reckoning that uncertain factor, the Volunteers. But only 33,000 were deemed ready for foreign service; and, owing to our diverse responsibilities in the Mediterranean, the Cape, and South America, it was deemed hazardous to send abroad more than 12,000 men³. Pitt and Barham had always kept transports ready for the immediate despatch of such a number. But, as their successors discontinued this practice, no force could be sent speedily to the help of our Allies. To this cause may be ascribed the very discreditable failure to aid Russia and Prussia in the spring of 1807, when the scales of war were hovering in the balance.

In March, 1807, the Grenville Cabinet fell, owing to its resolve to carry Catholic Emancipation and the King's invincible repugnance to that measure⁴. The cares of State now fell on the unimpressive Duke of Portland, the equally mediocre Hawkesbury (soon to become Earl of Liverpool) at the Home Office, the Earl of Chatham at the Ordnance, and Perceval at the Exchequer. Far stronger men were Lord Eldon as Lord Chancellor, Lord Castlereagh for War and the Colonies, and Canning for Foreign Affairs. In this Tory and Old-Whig Ministry, George Canning (1770-1827) alone calls for special notice here. His conversational and literary gifts had first shone in the brilliant society of Fox and Sheridan; but the French Revolution, fretting the rich

¹ F.O. Turkey, 156, 157; Collingwood, *Memoirs*, pp. 251-67; *Parl. Papers*, March 23rd, 1808; E. Driault, *La Politique orientale de Napoléon*, pp. 85-110; Adair, *Mission to Vienna*, p. 223.

² See *Plain Facts, or a Review of the Conduct of the late Ministers* (Stockdale, 2nd edit. June, 1807).

³ *Castlereagh Memoirs*, VIII. 46-8; Temperley, *G. Canning*, p. 72.

⁴ *Castlereagh Memoirs*, IV. 374-92; *Dropmore Papers*, IX. 100-20.

vein of sentiment in his nature, ranged him with Burke and Windham on the side of Pitt. Admiration of Pitt's genius and hatred of French Jacobinism were thenceforth the animating motives of his career. As Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs in 1796-9, he displayed equal firmness and imagination. Sympathising with his leader on the Catholic claims, he retired with him in 1801, but could not be restrained from contemptuous sallies on Addington as responsible for the detested Peace of Amiens:

Hail, thou, on whom our State is leaning!
O Minister of mildest meaning!
Head of wisdom, soul of candour
Happy Britain's guardian gander,
To rescue from th' invading Gaul
Her 'commerce, credit, capital!'

Returning with Pitt to office in May, 1804, as Treasurer of the Navy, he flung himself with ardour into the struggle against Napoleon, but refused to have a part in the gathering of "All the Talents," with "no Elijah near." Such was the statesman, versatile but resolute, generous but self-willed and intriguing, who, after four months of responsibility, was suddenly called on to solve one of the most complex and momentous problems of that age.

Like his father seven years previously, Alexander delighted Napoleon and exasperated his Allies by throwing the weight of Russia suddenly into the opposite scale. True, he had cause of complaint against us. In the spring and early summer of 1807, we had done little to help him in the Baltic except by the tardy despatch of a small force under General Cathcart to Stralsund. Three British sloops strove hard to harass the French besiegers of Danzig. But of what avail were three sloops? Danzig surrendered on May 27th; and its fall set free a considerable force for service in the field. Exasperation against the British was therefore rife at the Allied headquarters¹, especially after the catastrophe of Friedland (June 14th). Despite the arrival of large Russian reinforcements, Alexander soon decided to sue for an armistice; and, in a letter of June 24th, he stated to his Envoy, Prince Lobanoff, his desire for a Franco-Russian Alliance, which "alone can guarantee the welfare and repose of the world....An entirely new system ought to take the place of that which has existed here, and I flatter myself that we shall easily come to an understanding with the Emperor Napoleon, provided that we treat without intermediaries²." Probably,

¹ G. Jackson, *Diaries*, II. 148. ² Tatischeff, *Nouvelle Revue*, June 1st, 1890.

this avowal of a desire to break with Prussia and Great Britain became known at the Tsar's headquarters at Tilsit. Certain it is that a British agent, Mackenzie, who was there on June 23rd-5th, met with a friendly reception from the Commander-in-Chief, Bennigsen, and heard him exclaim at dinner on the 25th: "The two Emperors have shaken hands. Europe has cause to tremble."

On that day, Napoleon and Alexander met in the friendliest fashion on a raft in the middle of the River Niemen at Tilsit; and the question arises—How did the British Government come to know of Alexander's *volte-face*? A fantastic story states that a British spy was on the raft and heard all their private converse; but it is far more probable that secrets leaked out through Bennigsen or some other malcontent Russian officer. On his way back to London, Mackenzie arrived at Memel on June 26th, and brought news of the Armistice and other threatening symptoms to a group of British officials, including General Sir Robert Wilson, Sir George Jackson, Lord Hutchinson, then on a special mission, and the British Ambassador, Lord G. Leveson-Gower.

Nor was this all. Leveson-Gower's earlier despatches to Canning had contained warnings that Bernadotte's corps, near the southern border of Holstein, might invade that duchy, so as to compel Denmark to close the Sound to British ships; and now, on the 26th, he sent off by Mackenzie news of the Franco-Russian *rapprochement*. It reached Downing Street on July 16th. Already, our Envoy at Copenhagen, Garlike, had reported the Francophil tendencies of that Court. Further, the Earl of Pembroke, on proceeding *via* Copenhagen to take over the British Embassy at Vienna, had reported (incorrectly as afterwards appeared) considerable activity in the Danish dockyards. Official news from Altona also mentioned menacing moves of the French near by. Hence, the arrival, on or before July 16th, of very disquieting information from Memel, Copenhagen and Altona aroused intense anxiety at the Foreign Office. Were France, Russia and Denmark, possibly Prussia also, about to form a League like that of 1800-1 for the closing of the Baltic? On this occasion, the problem confronting the new Portland Cabinet was exceptionally complex; for a Northern League would threaten the communications of the British expeditionary force cooperating with our Swedish Allies at Stralsund. Further, the Portuguese and Danish fleets (the latter consisting of 15 sail of the line) might easily be seized by the French troops in their vicinity; and the combined Napoleonic fleets, backed by some 20 Russian sail,

Denmark, Sweden and Portugal to declare war against the Island Power¹. That Canning's keen intuitions divined the beginnings of what might have developed into a formidable plan may be granted; but his imagination soared high, when, on September 25th, he wrote to Paget that the Copenhagen expedition had prevented "a northern confederacy, an invasion of Ireland and the shutting of Russian ports²." More probably, it hastened the latter proceeding and its sequel, the Tsar's Declaration of War against Great Britain, which was issued so soon as he believed two of his squadrons to be secure. On the whole, the parliamentary debates of January-March, 1808, on this topic somewhat shook public confidence in the Ministry. Its harsh treatment of Denmark was reprobated by the Duke of Gloucester, Lord Grenville, the Duke of Norfolk, Lords Sidmouth, Darnley, Erskine, Moira, Hutchinson and Grey, as also by Windham, Ponsonby and Whitbread in the House of Commons.

To pass censorious judgments on Canning and his colleagues, as if the problem of July, 1807, had been a simple one, is unjust. The very existence of Great Britain was at stake; and the evidence which reached Downing Street on or before July 21st rendered it very probable that Napoleon would coerce Denmark and compel the surrender of her fleet. Moreover, Canning's intentions towards the Danes were, as his letters and despatches show, friendly. He even hoped for the formation of an Anglo-Scandinavian Alliance, which might save the North from the grasp of the two Emperors³. All this must be admitted. Nevertheless, the information on which he founded his inference as to Napoleon's designs on Denmark amounted, not to proof, but only to a high degree of probability; and it is very doubtful whether, on such evidence, he was justified in a course of action which might lead to hostilities with a weak Power. Would it not have been better to run the risk of the addition of 15 Danish sail of the line to the Napoleonic Armada than to incur the odium that must result from the seizure of those ships? This is the question. The conscience of that age, as of our own, has in general answered it in the affirmative.

In November, 1807, British policy exercised a somewhat stringent pressure on Portugal. Since our rupture with the Court of Madrid at the end of 1804, her existence had been precarious; and now the accord of the two Emperors at Tilsit portended ruin. Early in August, 1807, the Portuguese Ministers were aware that France and Spain

¹ Vandal, *Napoléon et Alexandre*, I. 505-7.

² *Paget Papers*, II. 363.

³ Rose, *Napoleonic Studies*, pp. 146-50; Lane-Poole, *Life of Stratford Canning*, I. 30.

would force them into war with Great Britain. They therefore begged our Government through its Ambassador, Viscount Strangford, to put up with a nominal state of war; but they failed to convince either Canning or him of the feasibility of their proposal. The British Government, also, urged resistance to Napoleon's demand for the confiscation of British ships and property; and to such a measure the Prince Regent promised never to stoop. By September 27th, however, Napoleon had laid his plans for the complete partition of Portugal, and these led up to the Franco-Spanish Treaty of Fontainebleau (October 27th), which assigned parts of the kingdom to Godoy and the dethroned King of Etruria, reserving the major portion for future disposal. French and Spanish forces now advanced towards Lisbon, the French being instructed to enter as friends, so as to seize the Portuguese fleet. On their near approach, Strangford with some difficulty induced the Prince Regent and his Government to retire from Portugal to Brazil under escort of the British fleet. Canning, also, signed with Portugal a Convention empowering us temporarily to occupy Madeira, as was done late in the year¹.

Thus, in the year 1807 the Sea and Land Powers bore hard upon Denmark and Portugal respectively, our treatment of the former being honourable and straightforward by comparison with the vulpine conduct of Napoleon towards Portugal. Yet his moves, equally skilful and forceful, pushed successively along the inner arcs of the Continent, everywhere prevailed; while Great Britain, acting without any system and with slighter forces at diverse points of the circumference, nearly everywhere failed. In that fatal year, Napoleon riveted the Continental System on Russia, Prussia and Spain, gained the Alliance of Denmark, annexed Etruria and the Ionian Isles, drove the Swedes from their Pomeranian province, and partitioned Portugal. The sole successes of the Islanders were the capture of Curaçoa and St Thomas, the seizure of the Danish fleet and the rescue of the Portuguese fleet from his clutches. It would be superfluous here to describe the Russian offer of mediation for a general peace. Conceived as it was in a spirit friendly to Napoleon, it could not find acceptance at Downing Street. Somewhat similar proposals coming from Vienna met with a friendly response². But the deep-rooted distrust of Napoleon had increased with every year of triumph of his forceful policy; and the pitilessness with which he

¹ F.O. Portugal, 55; Garden, x. 372; *Nap. Corr.* nos. 12839, 13235, 13237, 13243, 13314, and *Lettres inédites*, nos. 171, 188. *Tout discours est bon, pourvu qu'il* (Junot) *s'empare de l'escadre portugaise.*

² Coquelle, chs. XXI, XXII.

But now, when every month witnessed the diminution of Britain's resources and the aggrandisement of her enemy, there occurred an event destined to call forth her best energies and to alter the character of the struggle. On May 2nd, 1808, Madrid rose in fury against its French oppressors, and in a short space of time all the Spanish provinces threw off the yoke of Napoleon. It is alike impossible and superfluous to describe here the tortuous intrigues whereby he had occupied the Spanish strongholds, compassed the ruin of the Spanish Bourbons and placed Joseph Bonaparte on the Throne of Spain. By the first of May, he seemed to have at his feet the whole of the Peninsula, and to be about to marshal its forces for the two enterprises foremost in his thoughts, the utter isolation of Great Britain and the eventual partition of the Ottoman empire¹. By the end of the month, the Spaniards were in revolt against his usurped authority and three provinces were sending to London Envoys begging help from the then hostile British Government. The first to arrive were those of Asturias. They received a hearty welcome both from the people and from officials, Canning entertaining them at his house, and inviting Sir Arthur Wellesley to meet them. The honour of first proposing to Parliament the offer of aid to Spain fell to an orator who had generally opposed warlike measures. Sheridan, on June 15th, urged Ministers to seize the opportunity as the greatest that had occurred since the French Revolution for the rescue of a nation's liberty. "Hitherto" (he exclaimed) "Bonaparte has had to contend against princes without dignity and Ministers without wisdom. He has fought against countries in which the people have been indifferent as to his success. He has yet to learn what it is to fight against a country in which the people are animated with one spirit to resist him." Canning, thereupon, declared that Ministers viewed with admiration the rising of the Spaniards and desired to aid them immediately. "Sir" (he exclaimed), "it will never occur to us to consider that a state of war exists between Spain and Great Britain. We shall proceed upon the principle that any nation of Europe that starts up with a determination to oppose a Power which...is the common enemy of all nations, becomes instantly our essential Ally²."

This principle, which was confirmed and extended in the King's Speech of July 4th, marked the dawn of a new era in British Foreign Policy. The old policy had been based upon Treaties of the traditional type with monarchical Governments which were out of touch with

¹ *Nap. Corr.* February 2nd; April 29th; May 10th, 13th, 17th, 19th, 1808; *Lettres inédites*, no. 275.

² *Hansard*, xi. 886-96.

their peoples. The new policy involved trust in informal, but none the less binding, agreements with the peoples themselves. The old was always formal, frequently hollow, and not seldom secret. The new, springing out of vital sympathies, relied on the fundamental promptings of human nature, and therefore needed no very complicated, still less secret, stipulations. From the universal experience of mankind it was to be expected that the old method would persist long and would often invade and vitiate those of the new order. The new methods were often discarded amidst the complex arrangements of 1814-5 and of a later age; but, when once clearly asserted and shown to be workable, they were certain to gain ground; and their vitality could not but increase with the quickening of national consciousness and the growth of popular education. Thus, the months of May and June, 1808, inaugurate, not merely a novel policy, but, what is more important, a fresh spirit, destined to influence nations as well as Governments. The latter now tend to become the mouthpiece of the former; and it is significant that this development began with two essentially conservative nations. Spain and Great Britain led the way in asserting the claims of national independence as against the overweening pretensions of the "heir to the French Revolution." The wheel had come full circle. France, which, in 1793, had summoned all peoples to a crusade for freedom, now found embattled against her the primeval instincts of two great peoples, whose union was destined to arouse and invigorate other communities and reduce her to her former level.

For the present, Canning and Castlereagh sent help in money and arms to the juntas which forthwith sprang up in all districts of Spain. Canning strongly advised them to form a Central Junta, to which he would at once send a duly accredited Minister. Dreading the deep-rooted provincialism of the Spaniards, he forthwith urged them to a national union; and his despatches to the first British Envoy, Charles Stuart, and afterwards to Hookham Frere, refute the charges of Napier, that he lavished money heedlessly on local juntas¹. Meanwhile, the success of the Spaniards at Baylen (July 19th) where more than 20,000 of Napoleon's troops surrendered, assured the liberation of the south and centre; and, a month later, Sir Arthur Wellesley's force, sent out by Castlereagh with no very distinct aim in view, overthrew the French Army of Portugal at Vimeira. The arrival of incompetent seniors, Burrard and Dalrymple, before the end of the battle, alone saved that

¹ Napier, *Peninsular War*, I. Bk 2, ch. 1. See my article in *American Hist. Rev.* October, 1906.

army from disaster. Thereupon, at Torres Vedras, the British leaders (Wellesley rather reluctantly acceding) signed with General Junot a Convention, misnamed that of Cintra, whereby they secured control of a Russian fleet sheltering in the Tagus, and allowed the conveyance of the French army back to France on British ships. This compact has been defended on strictly military grounds; but it erred in not preventing the salvage of valuable booty by the French troops, and, still more, in not imposing restrictions on their future use in the Peninsular War. These omissions exasperated both the plundered Portuguese and the Spanish patriots, the latter declaring that, as the French veterans would soon again march through the Pyrenees into Spain, the British Generals had betrayed Spanish interests. The Convention, therefore, aroused the distrust of both Portuguese and Spaniards in British Generals, including Sir Arthur Wellesley. He and the senior officers were summoned home to face the enquiry which public indignation demanded. The King and Canning shared the widespread feeling, which was not dispelled by a generally favourable official verdict. The affair entailed another unfortunate result. Castle-reagh, as was his wont, loyally supported Wellesley, and, after the enquiry was over, insisted on his reappointment to the Peninsular command. To this Canning objected; and the quarrels between these two masterful Ministers became acute. Nevertheless, popular depression and the naggings of the Opposition failed to bend the Cabinet's resolve to persevere with the struggle in the Peninsula; and on December 9th, Canning despatched an indignant refusal to the Tsar's offer of mediation (agreed on at Erfurt), couched in terms which implied the recognition of Joseph Bonaparte as King of Spain.

The resolution to support the Spaniards was not shaken by the glorious but lamentable failure of Sir John Moore's campaign in northern Spain. On January 14th, 1809, a Treaty of Alliance was signed with the Central Junta of Seville. Sharp differences with the Spaniards and the reverses that were to be sustained during four years of wearing conflict failed to break that compact, which led up to the Treaty of 1814 with the restored Ferdinand VII. This fact alone emphasises the contrast between the Anglo-Spanish union and the artificial Conventions which built up the first three essentially fragile Coalitions. Well might the prophet of that age say: "In all that regarded the destinies of Spain, and her own as connected with them, the voice of Britain had the unquestionable sound of inspiration¹."

¹ Wordsworth, *Convention of Cintra* (Oxford edit. 1915, p. 110).

IV

In other quarters than the Iberian Peninsula, British policy for the present worked ineffectively. To the German national movement, which began to make headway early in 1809, Ministers, especially Castlereagh, were irresponsive. Yet, after the interview of Napoleon and Alexander at Erfurt in September to October, 1808, there were clear signs that the French Emperor would fall upon Austria so soon as he had defeated the Spanish patriots; and, at the end of 1808, when success had crowned his arms in the Peninsula, he hurried back to Paris to prepare for the new conflict. At that time, marked by the utter humiliation of Prussia, the hopes of all German patriots centred in Vienna. Reforms, both civil and military, were renovating the energies of the Habsburg States; the Tyrolese longed to return to their allegiance to the Emperor Francis; and his patriarchal sway was regretted by many other South-Germans. For a brief space, there appeared a faint hope that Canning might league Great Britain, Austria, Turkey and Persia together against Napoleon and the Tsar. Such was the scheme which he entrusted to Sir Robert Adair, urging him to effect a reconciliation with the Turks. Perceiving that we had acted against them early in 1807 solely on behalf of Russia, they were by no means loth to make peace; but oriental pride and lethargy spun out the negotiations until January, 1809; and then it was too late to frame so extensive a league in time for the War that speedily ensued¹.

The dictates of sound policy should have led Prussia to act in conjunction with Austria—a course which Hardenberg and Gneisenau secretly, but strongly, urged. Indeed, in the spring of 1809, there appeared the first signs of a widespread union of the peoples from the Tagus to the Niemen. But on their side all was vague, and the advantages of central position and effective organisation remained with Napoleon. He seemed to have mastered the Spaniards, and his union with Alexander was unimpaired. Moreover, Austria's preparations were far from complete, and the German patriots, besides being unorganised, could not receive from Britain the timely and effective help which her fleet could afford to those of Spain and Portugal. These considerations and the notorious indecision of Frederick William told against the acceptance of requests for help either at Stralsund or on the Hanoverian coast. Austria, also, sent lofty demands for pecuniary aid, and suggested diversions by us in Spain, Italy and the mouth of the Weser.

¹ Adair, *Mission to Constantinople*, 1. *ad fin.*

Thus, the choice open to Ministers was bewilderingly wide, the presence of a French squadron at Flushing also inviting a dash on that important post and Antwerp. It is, therefore, not surprising that sharp divisions of opinion should have arisen in the Cabinet, accentuating the disputes between those temperamental opposites, Castlereagh and Canning. The former, however, in March carried his point for the despatch of Sir Arthur Wellesley to Portugal for the defence of that country and such wider operations as he should judge expedient. The sum of £30,000 was accorded to the German patriots, with the promise of a British squadron in the Baltic. Lastly, after some initial difficulties, Liverpool signed an Alliance with Austria (April 24th)¹.

All these arrangements were belated; for, though the Tsar warned Austria against action, and Frederick William obstinately clung to inaction, she rushed into the fray with the nervous haste that had assured her doom in 1805. Now, again, it fell on her quickly. Archduke Charles invaded Bavaria on April 12th, and, on May 13th, Napoleon entered Vienna in triumph. The patriotic risings of Dörnberg, Schill and the young Duke of Brunswick came to naught in April-May, the British squadron in the Baltic being too fully occupied with the Russians and Danes to render effective help to the brave Schill in his last stand at Stralsund². Signal ill fortune beset all the British plans for 1809. In April, an attack by Admiral Gambier with a powerful squadron on the French fleet in the Aix roads off Rochefort was a failure despite the gallant but unsupported efforts of Cochrane with fireships and small craft. Far more costly and disastrous was the Walcheren expedition, directed against Antwerp. Knowing the importance which Napoleon attached to that dockyard, on which 66,000,000 francs had of late been expended, Castlereagh drew up a plan of attack so early as July, 1808. In March, and again in May, 1809, he revived the scheme, and on the 18th offered the command of the land forces to Lord Chatham³. He was therefore responsible for what proved to be a very unfortunate choice. His nominee, far from having adequate experience in war, had displayed, even in civil affairs, a tardiness which won him the nickname of the *late* Lord Chatham. Indeed, so soon as Thomas Grenville heard of this appointment to the command of "35,000 of our best and last troops," he foretold the failure of the expedition. His forecast was but too true. Chatham

¹ Fortescue, *British Army*, Bk 13, ch. xxv.

² Sir J. Ross, *Memoirs of Adm. Lord de Saumarez*, II. ch. ix. *Journals... of Byron Martin*, II. 67-112.

³ *Castlereagh Memoirs*, VI. 247, 256.

delayed the sailing of the fleet unnecessarily¹: it weighed from the Downs on July 28th, three weeks after the overthrow of Austria; and the local difficulties, added to disagreements with Rear-admiral Sir Richard Strachan, marred an enterprise which, if pushed on betimes with forceful energy, might have turned the scales of war on the Danube. By comparison with this costly failure, Wellington's Talavera campaign was successful. He won a decisive victory, and, though compelled by the follies and selfishness of the Spanish commanders to retreat hastily on Portugal, his advance revealed the artificiality of the Napoleonic régime in the Peninsula. Three years full of disaster were however needed, in order to teach the Spaniards the necessity of close and loyal cooperation with him.

Meanwhile, the Walcheren fiasco brought to a climax the long series of disagreements between Canning and Castlereagh. Inheriting the hot temper and self-will of their Anglo-Irish ancestry, they always clashed. Even in affairs of high moment which demanded cooperation, they held aloof from each other with untoward results. Portland, now nearing the end of his ineffective career, utterly failed to maintain harmony. Indeed, his forgetfulness complicated the quarrel between them; and the feud came to an appropriate ending—a duel on Putney Heath, in which Canning was slightly wounded, and a partial reconciliation. The Portland Cabinet now collapsed. Spencer Perceval, its pedestrian but conscientious Chancellor of the Exchequer, sought to refashion it, with the addition of Lords Grenville and Grey; but the King's invincible repugnance to Catholic Emancipation, which they made a test question, deprived the country of their services². The new Perceval Cabinet was, therefore, distinctly Tory: five Ministers, Perceval, Camden, Eldon, Mulgrave and Chatham retaining their former executive functions, while Liverpool became Secretary for War and the Colonies, and Bathurst for Foreign Affairs. The last-named was soon succeeded by Marquis Wellesley, who, after a distinguished viceroyalty in India (1798–1805), had latterly gone to Seville as Envoy to the Central Spanish Junta. A novice in diplomacy, he soon fell into the adversary's traps, and his inexperience was not made good by assiduity; for young Stratford Canning at the Constantinople Embassy complained that he only received scanty despatches from him, and at long intervals³. Nevertheless, Wellesley was well fitted by administrative

¹ *Dropmore Papers*, IX. 311, 312.

² *Dropmore Papers*, IX. 322 et seq. F. Horner, *Memoirs*, II. 499.

³ Lane-Poole, *Life of Stratford Canning*, I. 91, 129.

experience, and by special knowledge of the peculiar difficulties confronting his brother in Spain, to forward the most important enterprise undertaken by Great Britain since 1792. In the dark years, 1809-11, everything turned on the Peninsular War; and, while some of his colleagues at times shrank from the responsibility of continuing that apparently hopeless struggle, Wellesley never quailed. To him, Perceval and Liverpool is due the credit of persisting in an enterprise which elicited the croakings of the Grenvilles, the gibes of Cobbett, and the nervous remonstrances of the City of London¹.

Meanwhile, difficulties beset us from other quarters. The mad obstinacy of Gustavus IV, having foiled our efforts to help him², he was constrained to abdicate. His successor, Charles XIII, though friendly to Great Britain and supported by her fleet, was fain to come to terms with Russia (September, 1809), and, early in the next year, with Napoleon. This capitulation involved the entrance of Sweden into the Continental System, and consequently war between her and Great Britain; but the Admiralty privately instructed Vice-admiral Sir James Saumarez, commander in the Baltic, to avoid hostile action; and the tactful manner in which he carried out this difficult duty rendered possible the resumption of friendly relations in 1811-12³. For the present, however, British trade was almost entirely excluded from the Baltic.

Further, the movements of two French army corps on Holland portended the annexation of that kingdom. Napoleon had long complained of the softness of his brother Lewis in tempering the severities of the Continental System; and he now devised the expedient of a threatened annexation, in order to compel Great Britain to make peace on his terms. This device he put into effect, partly through King Lewis, partly through the Dutch Foreign Minister, Roëll. Believing that a general peace could alone stave off annexation, they lent themselves to the plan; and Roëll selected as a go-between Labouchère, a Dutch banker of high repute, son-in-law of Sir Francis Baring of London, who was a Director of the East India Company. Having reason to believe in Wellesley's desire for peace, now that the Spaniards were on the verge of disaster, they hoped to induce him and his colleagues to mitigate the Orders in Council of 1807 in proof of their pacific desires. After the experience of the peace negotiations of 1806, and

¹ *Dropmore Papers*, IX. 287, 313-21, 370-2; Cobbett's *Political Reg.* (February 17th, 1810).

² *Diary of Sir J. Moore*, II. ch. XXIV.

³ Sir J. Ross, *Memoirs of Saumarez*, II. ch. XI.

even more of Napoleon's offers in the years following, British Ministers should have distrusted all such proposals. Nevertheless, early in 1810 Wellesley toyed with a peace overture emanating from that arch-intriguer, Fouché, Napoleon's Minister of Police. He, on his own account, sent an *Émigré* named Fagan, of Irish extraction, to sound the Perceval Cabinet as to possible terms. Since Fouché insisted that Spain was now conquered and that France must have Sicily, the overture was soon at an end. Fouché was not daunted. He next sent over Labouchère, accredited from the tottering Dutch Government. On February 7th, 1810, Wellesley gave him a cordial reception, but then, and on the 11th, informed him that the Orders in Council must remain in force, unless Napoleon would withdraw his Decrees, to which they were a reply. Labouchère, hereupon, pressed him to save the Dutch from annexation, an aim with which Wellesley expressed sympathy, adding however that in other matters (Spain and Sicily were meant) Napoleon evinced no desire for a reasonable compromise. Perceiving that he could not bend the British Government, Napoleon ordered the military occupation of Holland, and in March, 1810, annexed her southern provinces.

A third overture, made by Fouché on his own responsibility through Baring and a speculator, Ouvrard, belongs rather to the sphere of Court comedy than of international policy. Purporting to come from Napoleon as a kind of wedding gift to the world (he married Marie-Louise of Austria on April 2nd, 1810), it proposed to assign Spanish America to Ferdinand VII of Spain, and to effect a partition of the United States between Napoleon and George III. On April 6th and 14th Wellesley discussed this fantastic scheme with Baring, even consulting Canning about it, and not until May 8th are there signs that he suspected a hoax. Indeed, it was Napoleon who discovered the secret, whereupon he dismissed and exiled Fouché, and arrested Ouvrard. His rage gave full publicity to the affair, thus arousing much merriment among the *frondeurs* both of the Boulevard St Germain and of St James's. Wellesley was covered with ridicule; and pacific offers from Paris thenceforth seemed mere tricks to weaken and divide the Cabinet. Proposals for an exchange of prisoners went on until the autumn of 1810, but thereupon lapsed, probably owing to Napoleon's confident belief that Masséna's great army would compel Wellington to a capitulation¹.

¹ For a full account of these negotiations, based on new evidence, see Coquelle, chs. xxviii-xxx1; also xxxii-xxxvi for the exchange of prisoners.

Until October 10th, when the British commander began his triumphant defence of the lines of Torres Vedras, the prospects were indeed gloomy. At home, the Government, which nervously, but faithfully, supported him, was barely warding off the attacks of the Opposition leaders, who continued to declaim against the folly and expense of the Peninsular War. The Reform movement, championed by Sir Francis Burdett, was gathering head owing to notorious administrative abuses; and the existing discontent was increased by the decline of the export trade and dearness of corn. When work was scarce and wheat sold at five guineas the quarter, the demand for peace became insistent; and it required all the firmness of Perceval to stave off a national surrender to an antagonist whose power and good fortune seemed boundless. On the whole, it appears that the charges of timidity and time-serving brought against his Administration in regard to the War in Spain are unfounded. True, he and Liverpool, on several occasions, warned Wellington that it might become necessary to withdraw his army; and their private intimations sometimes differed inexcusably from their official communications. But, in view of the weakness of the Cabinet, the strength of the Opposition and the tightness of the money-market, they seem to have done their best; and it was well to apprise Wellington betimes that evacuation might, on other than military grounds, become necessary. He framed his measures accordingly¹. Later, on mature consideration of the difficulties of the Government, he exonerated Perceval and Liverpool from the savage censures which Napier heaped upon them². His vindication deserves to be quoted:

I have always, in public as in private, declared my obligations to the Government for the encouragement and support which they gave me, and the confidence with which they treated me. I was not the Government, as the Duke of Marlborough was....There was a formidable opposition to the Government in Parliament, which opposed itself particularly to the operations of the war in the Peninsula....It is quite certain that my opinion alone was the cause of the continuance of the war in the Peninsula. My letters show that I encouraged, nay forced, the Government to persevere in it. The successes of the operations of the army supported them in power. But it is not true that they did not, in every way in their power, as individuals, as Ministers and as a Government, support me³.

Fortunately, Wellington had faced about at the Lines of Torres

¹ *Wellington Despatches*, v. 280-2, 343, 426, 470, 481, 542; vi. 6-10, 51, 147, 320.
370; *Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 547.

² Napier, *Peninsular War*, Bk xi. ch. x, Bk xiv. ch. 11.

³ Stanhope, *Conversations with...Wellington*, 82, 83.

Vedras, before home affairs entered upon an acute crisis. In October, 1810, George III became insane, and the Opposition hoped that the accession of the Prince of Wales as Regent would be fatal to the Ministry. Sharp altercations occurred in Parliament as to the Ministerial proposals for restrictions on his authority; but finally they were carried. The Prince made tentative offers to Grenville and Grey for the formation of a Cabinet, but in vain, owing to the stringency of their conditions; otherwise, it is probable that Wellington and his army would have been recalled from the Peninsula. By degrees, the Prince drifted away from his Whig advisers; and in February, 1812, when a permanent Regency Bill was passed, all risk of such an issue was at an end. It is not too much to say that, in the latter half of 1810, the whole burden of the Napoleonic War rested on the shoulders of Wellington; and never was a crushing load borne so prudently, so manfully, so triumphantly.

The same months witnessed the completion of the Continental System by the annexation of Holland in July, and of the north-western districts of Germany in December. Napoleon also tightened the cordon against British commerce by the Trianon and Fontainebleau decrees of August and October. The former was an involuntary tribute to the success of our merchants in importing colonial produce into his lands; for, assuming that all such produce was of British origin, he now subjected it to heavy imposts, averaging 50 per cent. *ad valorem*. Alone among his Allies, Alexander I declined to enforce this oppressive tariff; but he complied with an imperious missive from Paris requiring the confiscation of a very large number of neutral (mostly British) ships then in the Baltic¹. This was the severest blow yet sustained by our commerce, and the heavy loss of merchantmen (*viz.* 619) in that year, as well as the sharp decline in exports, doubtless explain the prevalence of discontent and the timidity of our foreign policy².

Lack of information or want of enterprise accounts for the neglect in the year 1810, of a favourable opportunity for coming to a friendly understanding with the United States. As has been seen, ineffectual efforts were made in the previous year; but President Madison, though originally Francophil, had not been irresponsive. Moreover, Napoleon in his conduct towards the States had been both harsh and insincere, retorting on their Non-intercourse Act of 1809 by secret measures

¹ Probably many were American. See H. Adams, *Hist. of the United States*, v. 408-19.

² *Camb. Mod. Hist.* ix. 242, 372-4; *Eng. Hist. Rev.* (Jan. 1903) p. 122.

nature and furious likes and dislikes complicated even the plainest issues. On the failure of British efforts against Ischia and the Neapolitan coast in 1809, she seems to have entered into secret relations with Murat's underlings. Certainly, she conceived a violent hatred against the British officials in Sicily, as also against its quasi-parliamentary régime. Not even the increase of the British subsidy to £400,000 a year satisfied her extravagance or softened her complaints. Consequently the Sicilians and the British drew more closely together, and many were the demonstrations in which the islanders shouted *Viva il Re Georgio*. Our Envoys, à Court and Lord Amherst, successively failed to assuage the disputes with the Queen; and, when her autocratic proceedings caused a deadlock between her and the Sicilian Constitutionals, the home Government despatched as Envoy a man of commanding gifts. Lord William Bentinck, formerly Governor of Madras, was more than a match for Maria Carolina, who was moved to strong aversion by his somewhat hard and ungracious disposition. After reporting at London, he returned in December, 1811, armed with authority to end the crisis. The stoppage of the British subsidy and threats of a British occupation of Palermo induced Ferdinand early in 1812 to transfer his authority to the Prince Royal; but Bentinck deemed it necessary in March, 1812, to remove Ferdinand and his Queen into the interior. These high-handed proceedings cleared the way for the promulgation by the Sicilian Parliament of a Constitution closely modelled on that of Great Britain (June, 1812). The abolition of feudal privileges and other changes soon produced a slight reaction, of which the Queen sought to take advantage. Further disputes ensued, and Bentinck finally resolved to procure her departure from the island. When about to return, she died in Austria, in September, 1814. The new régime in Sicily soon vanished during the period of reaction which then set in; but, in the gloomy years that followed, it remained the cynosure of all Italian patriots; and the events of 1848 and 1860 made it clear that, of all the influences exerted by Great Britain in these years of strife, none was more fruitful than the "English Constitution" of 1812¹.

The British occupation of Sicily, as we have seen, helped to cover Turkey against Napoleon's schemes of partition, which in 1808 prompted his Spanish enterprise. The resumption, early in 1809, of friendly relations with the Sultan was of great service, inasmuch as, from 1810

¹ Sir H. Bunbury, *The Great War*, 278-80, 329, 442, 462, 464; R. M. Johnston, *The Napoleonic Empire in Southern Italy*, II. ch. VIII; *Castlereagh Memoirs*, VIII. 213-32; Blaquière, *Letters from the Mediterranean* (1813). A. Bonneloni (*Marie-Caroline*, ch. XI) gives a more favourable verdict on her. See too *infra*, p. 455.

to 1812, his empire was the only neutral State in Europe, and his ports opened up trade routes, devious it is true, into its central plain. Austria, southern Germany, even France, received the costly trickles that found their way in, *via* Salonica, Belgrade and up the course of the Danube. The hostilities between Russia and Turkey never stopped this traffic. And so, from the Balkan Peninsula, Sicily, Malta, Gibraltar, the Channel Islands, Heligoland and Anholt, the Continental System received constant punctures which rendered it largely inoperative. The United Kingdom suffered, but on the whole less than the States subject to Napoleon; so that a French Royalist lampoon of the year 1810 thus pictured the result—

*Votre blocus ne bloque point,
Et, grâce à votre heureuse adresse,
Ceux que vous affamez sans cesse
Ne périront que d'embonpoint.*

The general situation towards the end of 1811 was one of extraordinary interest. The Continental System, stretched to its utmost, showed signs of cracking. Yet Napoleon's power seemed boundless. Central and southern Europe obeyed his behests. Only Portugal and a few outlying parts of Spain defied the Imperial eagles. The Tsar had as yet given no clear sign of political alienation from Napoleon, who swayed Europe from Seville to Tilsit. Moreover, the United Kingdom suffered seriously from the severer measures imposed by Napoleon on his States late in 1810. The value of our exports of manufactures fell from £34,061,901 in 1810 to £22,681,400 in 1811; and that of foreign and colonial merchandise reexported, from £9,357,435 in 1810 to £6,117,720 in 1811¹. This serious decline, together with the increase in the cost of the Peninsular War, and the outbreak of serious outrages known as the Luddite Riots, gave cause for grave concern. Yet there was little thought of surrender. The Tsar, while remaining outwardly friendly to Napoleon, had, in January, 1811, imposed taxes on certain French products, and so far relaxed the Continental System in Russia and Finland, as to throw open his ports to all vessels sailing under a neutral flag. This sign of economic independence not only annoyed Napoleon, but offered the means of surreptitiously introducing British and colonial produce, of which Russia stood in dire need. Equally pressing was her need of the export trade to the British Isles, which had taken her corn, timber, hemp, tar and similar products. She and Sweden stood in vital relations to

¹ Porter, *Progress of the Nation*, 357.

we accorded naval, military and financial succour, transferred a West India island to her, and assured her territorial extension, especially on the side of Norway. On March 13th, 1812, Castlereagh wrote to Thornton (then on his way to Sweden *via* Leith), welcoming the proposal of peace and alliance. He stated that we did not require Sweden to declare war on Napoleon, but (subject to the demands of the Peninsular War which was our chief concern) we would defend her by a fleet in case of a Russian invasion or a Franco-Danish attack through Norway. We would consider her request for a West India island, and, while deferring a decision respecting Norway, would endeavour to meet her wishes for compensation for the loss of Finland and Swedish Pomerania. In separate and "secret" letters, he instructed Thornton to see the Prince Royal and sound his intentions; and he added that Mr Liston would at once proceed to Constantinople to seek to promote peace between the Sultan and Russia¹.

These despatches reveal the combination of foresight and prudence characteristic of a statesman. Avoiding the veiled threats that had lately given offence, Castlereagh now displays full consideration for Sweden in her difficulties, promises to help her if she is attacked by France and Denmark, but holds out no unreal hopes either of assistance from us or of aggrandisement for her. Thus, the affair was placed on a sound footing. A fortnight later, he promises that, when Sweden makes peace, the Orders in Council of January, 1807, so far as they concern her, will be revoked (a proof that those Orders were in part designed to exert diplomatic pressure and that Ministers were beginning to consider the question of abrogating them). He also points out that her ports will then become the depôts for British trade in the Baltic, and he adds the significant statement that, on the conclusion of the hoped-for Russo-Swedish peace, a British officer will be sent to discuss the operations to be carried on against the enemy; and he notes Sweden's present proposal "that measures should be adopted to induce Denmark to join the confederacy against France, and [that] in exchange for Norway, to be ceded to Sweden, an extension of territory should be given to Denmark on the side of Germany." As to this, the Prince Regent declares that such extension must not be at the expense of Hanover. It is clear that Castlereagh, remembering the flash of Danish pride in August, 1807, had little hope of inducing that people by threats of coercion and invasion to side against France; for, on April 14th, he writes to Thornton suggesting the offer to Denmark

¹ F.O. Sweden, 71. (See *Appendix* for extracts.)

of Swedish Pomerania and some other German land as a friendly exchange for Norway. On April 24th, he charges Thornton to inform the Swedish Government that the Prince Regent had resolutely declined Napoleon's offer of recent peace on the basis of the recognition of Joseph Bonaparte as King of Spain. As this implied the abandonment of the Spanish patriots, the British answer could not be doubtful¹.

Though Napoleon's peace overture to Great Britain implied a desire to dissolve the nascent Coalition, and was so regarded by the negotiators, yet the Anglo-Swedish accord progressed very slowly. Sweden required the restoration of peace with Great Britain to be accompanied by the framing of a joint concert with Russia. Castlereagh demurred to this proviso, especially since Russia was preparing with Sweden a compact, the purport of which she withheld. On the ground of our responsibilities to the Spaniards and Portuguese, he declined as excessive the Swedish requests for a subsidy of £1,200,000; and, as for the acquisition of Norway, he suggested that, preferably, Denmark should join the future League and obtain the compensation for the surrender of Norway, as noted above. While welcoming the news of a Russo-Swedish understanding, Castlereagh was evidently puzzled by the aloofness of Russia, but, on May 8th, expressed his willingness to meet her advances when proffered. It came to this, then: that Sweden expected from us a large subsidy and an assumption of wide and vague responsibilities, she herself offering nothing very tangible in return, but the hitch in the Swedish negotiation was clearly due to Bernadotte's resolve not to move against France unless the Allies guaranteed Norway to him. This fact, and others of curious import, are set forth in the Castlereagh-Thornton despatches², which throw light on the schemes of the Prince Royal and Napoleon, proving *inter alia*, that the latter was bidding high for Swedish support. Hence, perhaps, the delay on the Swedish side. At Petrograd, the Tsar seems to have wished for a speedy peace with Great Britain. As will soon appear, she was working at Constantinople on his behalf, and the desire to propitiate him, as well as the United States, explains the sudden (though belated) abrogation of the Orders in Council on June 16th, 1812. Nevertheless, up to the end of June his desire for union with her was thwarted by his Francophil Minister, Romanzoff, who, by various dilatory devices, staved off a decision.

¹ F. O. Sweden, 71. Castlereagh to Thornton, March 25th, 27th; April 14th, 1812. *Nap. Corr.* no. 18652. Fain, *Manuscrit de 1812*, I. 98-102, with Castlereagh's reply.

² See *Appendix H*.

Meanwhile, as so often happened, Napoleon put an end to these lengthy chafferings by a sudden attack. But he had occupied Vilna during three weeks and was advancing on Vitebsk, before Russia and Sweden signed a Treaty of Peace with Great Britain at Örebrö in Sweden (July 17th). Thornton at once warned Saumarez to do all he could to help our new Allies; but the delays just noticed prevented the timely direction of British naval power against the French heavy transport, which was largely carried on by sea from Danzig to their line of operations in Lithuania. Later, Saumarez and his captains did much to harass that service; but far more would have been done but for the protracted delays in signing the Treaties of Örebrö. The Russian force, designed to cooperate with Sweden in an attack on Copenhagen (now that the Danes remained obdurate) was, also, not ready in time. Consequently, that part of the Allied plans of 1812 was postponed; and not until the end of the year did Thornton announce a definite rupture between Sweden and Napoleon. Meanwhile, General Lord Cathcart had been deputed to the veiled threats of the Minister since the assassination of Perceval displays full consideration for Petrograd. On his arrival early in 1812, he promises to help her if she is attacked and his resolve to place in deposit out no unreal hopes either of assistance or of a soun. It is on 14th April. A fortnight later, he promises that, when Sweden makes peace, the Orders in Council of January, 1807, so far as should concern her, will be revoked (a proof that those Orders were in effect designed to exert diplomatic pressure and that Ministers were beginning to consider the question of abrogating them). He also promises that her ports will then become the depôts for British trade, which were Baltic, and he adds the significant statement that, on the close of the of the hoped-for Russo-Swedish peace, a British officer will discuss the operations to be carried on against the enemy; involved Russia Sweden's present proposal "that measures should be adopted to induce Denmark to join the confederacy against France, to be ceded to Sweden, an extensive exchange for Norway, to be ceded to Sweden, an extensive exchange for Norway, to be ceded to Sweden, an extensive exchange for Norway, to be ceding on the should be given to Denmark on the side of Germany. the Prince Regent declares that such extension must lead to the expense of Hanover. It is clear that Castlereagh, remembering the flash of Danish pride in August, 1807, had little hope of people by threats of coercion and invasion to side against and the Turks, on April 14th, he writes to Thornton suggesting the offer

¹ F.O. Sweden, 71. (See Appendix for extracts.) in Russia and Germany, 11. 281-9.

even suggesting to Wellesley, in March, 1810, the cession to her of one of our West India Islands, in order to bring about a conjoint settlement and an eventual Anglo-Russo-Turkish Union. Nothing resulted from his proposals, except that the Porte became convinced of our goodwill¹. Adair, therefore, recommended the adoption of a vigorous Mediterranean policy, involving the occupation of Corfu, Cattaro and Elba, so as to enclose and throttle the Continental System from the south. With that aim in view, the islands of Zante, Cephalonia, and Cerigo had been captured from the French in 1809; Sta. Maura was taken in 1810; but the French in Corfu held out until after the first abdication of Napoleon. It is clear, then (despite the denial of Sir Henry Bunbury²) that the British Government had a definite Mediterranean policy. From the Ionian Islands, it threatened the Napoleonic States on the Adriatic and also screened Turkey from the attacks, which, at and after Tilsit, the French Emperor meditated against her from those islands, from Cattaro and from Dalmatia. His inability to push on the schemes of partition foremost in his thoughts, also, fomented a feeling of annoyance with the Tsar, who, after the conquest of the Danubian provinces, was in a position easily to overrun Serbia (then by in a state of ferment) and even to threaten Roumelia and Constantinople. This feeling of jealousy played its part in bringing about the Swepture of 1812.

and v. Adair being compelled by illness to return home in June, 1810, in rett honour of furthering British, Turkish, and eventually Russian, Bernad rests in the impending world-crisis devolved upon his young guarantee of legation, Stratford Canning, the ambition of whose life it are set forth to serve England in England. Fate willed that he should serve light on the s onstantinople. Before he took his degree at Cambridge, he alia, that the antly pressed into the diplomatic service, of which he be perhaps, the ost distinguished ornament during the 19th century. Owing to have wished, rious health of Adair, George Canning in July, 1809, appear, she was is young cousin, provisionally, Minister-plenipotentiary desire to propit collapse of the Ambassador; and this duty devolved upon sudden (though immer, 1810. French influence was then unbounded and 16th, 1812. Nev wed before it. This youth of twenty-three had to fight with her was thw gle-handed: for he very rarely received instructions or by various dilate he next Foreign Minister, Marquis Wellesley. Probably of the chief developed the resourcefulness and resolu-

¹ F. O. Sweden, R. Adair, *The Peace of the Dardanelles*, II. 10-21, 95, 270.
1812. *Nap. Corr.* n. Great War with France, p. 327.
reply.

² See Appendix

W. & G. I.

French
tion of the young Envoy. Confronted by intrigues at the French Embassy and corruption and apathy at the Porte, he did not lose sight of high From Consul-general David Morier (father of sons destined to go with repute in the public service), he gained good advice as to dealing with orientals: but his native shrewdness and force of character using the every opportunity. He continued Adair's policy of support of the masterful Anglophil Ali Pacha, of Jannina ("the Lion of Epirus") whose magnanimous and cruel nature inspired terror among the Greeks and appalled British at the Porte. He also seconded the efforts of Sir Gore Ouseley, an alliance Envoy at Teheran, to thwart the efforts for a Franco-Persian alliance which Napoleon had begun in the spring of 1807. In short, to foil him, without advice or help from Downing Street, to try to prevent Napoleon's enterprises from the Adriatic to the borders of Afghanistan.

It is difficult to account for Wellesley's neglect of the Commission to the noble embassy; for, besides being the only important British embassy on the Continent, it offered a ready means of influencing Lord Stratford's Austrian and Russian politics. Furthermore, if (as Adair and Lord Canning urged) a powerful British squadron could have been sent to the Black Sea to join the Turks in an attack on Sevastopol, the Tsar would, probably, have consented to negotiate for peace with the young Powers. But, the strain on the British navy being very great, the Minister had to rely on diplomatic means. Here, Lord Castlereagh favoured him. By the autumn of 1811, the young Sultan, Mahmud II, and his Ministers expressed a desire for the good services of the media-Britain to end their conflict with Russia, and they declined the mediation of any other Power, although that of France would have been more in accord with custom, she being an Ally of the Tsar. An armistice was concluded in November; and at the end of the year the Tsar despatched a Plenipotentiary, Italinski, to negotiate for peace with Turkey—a sign that he expected a rupture with Napoleon in negotiations, to concentrate all his resources upon that struggle. Nevertheless, accordingly, began at Bukharest.

Naturally enough, the French sought to thwart the bright hope to pointed out that, with the help of the French, Turkey might part of the reconquer not only the Danubian Provinces, but also the magnificent Ukraine, and thus renew the glories of Suleiman the Magnificent. On to this Ambition and the promptings of Napoleon spurred her

¹ *Nap. Corr.* no. 12563; Gardane, *La Mission du Gén. Gardane en Perse*; Poole, *Life of Stratford Canning*, I. 105, 128-39.

adventurous course. Prudence and the advice of Canning counselled otherwise. The chaotic condition of the Ottoman realms, the penury of their finances, the bad discipline of their troops, the rebellions of their Pachas and the restiveness of the native Christians, called aloud for a speedy peace as the only means of averting disintegration and ruin. On one point, the Divan was irrevocably pledged. "Not an inch of land" was the maxim which it opposed to the land-hunger of the Muscovites. At times, the clash of Turkish pride and Russian persistence seemed irremediable. On February 6th, Canning wrote to Wellesley that the French Embassy deemed the negotiation at an end. Such was the general impression, and it induced in Napoleon, even at the end of March, the confident belief that a renewal of the Russo-Turkish War would embarrass the Tsar and prevent him braving the power of France¹. Meanwhile, on February 19th, Stratford Canning had taken the unusual step of writing (with the approval of the Sultan) to the Neapolitan Minister at Petrograd, asking him to use his good offices at that Court and to represent the need of moderation in the Russian demands and the danger of exasperating the Turks so highly as to drive them into the arms of France. On the same day, he wrote to the Turkish and Russian negotiators at Bukharest, ending his letter to Italinski with these words: "The conclusion of peace between Russia and the Porte would be one obstacle the less to peace between Russia and England, and consequently to that peace which alone can secure the true repose of the universe." To the Turkish negotiator, he explained the course of French intrigues for the prolongation of the Russo-Turkish War, and in cautious terms he offered the services of Great Britain for its settlement². But this was not all. On hearing that the Divan was strongly inclined to reject Russia's terms, he (to quote his words), "sent to tell the Reis Effendi that I trusted every effort consistent with the dignity, and every concession not incompatible with the safety, of the Empire would be made for the restoration of peace at the present crisis, and that, in order to give a striking proof of H.M.'s sincere regard for the Porte, I was ready to lend every assistance in my power towards the accomplishment of so desirable an object³."

How far the actions of Stratford Canning influenced the final issue is uncertain. The belligerents knew that his actions were not authorised

¹ *Nap. Corr.* no. 18622. See Zinkeisen, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reichs*, vii, 718-29.

² Lane-Poole, I. 161-3.

³ F.O. Turkey (1812). Stratford Canning to Wellesley, February 21st.

from Downing Street. Indeed, on March 11th, he wrote to Wellesley, pointing out the unfortunate results of his long silence on eastern affairs, which contrasted with the activity of the French Embassy. But six days later, he reported that the Grand Vizier had now received full powers to conclude peace with Russia on the best terms possible – a decision due to fear lest Napoleon and Alexander should come to an understanding and recur to their policy of partitioning Turkey.¹ Moreover, at the end of April, the Tsar, through the medium of the Prince Royal of Sweden, had informed the British Government that he “had given instructions to make peace at all events with the Porte and on any concession of his pretensions, provided only that they [*i.e.* the Turks] would enter into the alliance with England, Russia and Sweden.”² The Turks declined an offer of offensive alliance which would involve hostilities with Napoleon. Indeed, they feared that even a peace with Russia might bring on them an attack from his Illyrian and Dalmatian Provinces.³ Their apprehensions were not unreal; for he was about to send as Special Ambassador General Andréossi, with offers of alliance rich in allurements but not devoid of threats. The attitude of his Ally, Austria, was also menacing.⁴ On the other hand, Sweden sent a mission to reassure the Sultan of his support.

Against diverse difficulties, Stratford Canning struggled manfully. Unfortunately, the accession of Castlereagh to the Foreign Secretaryship took place too late to afford official support at Constantinople. Liston [1742–1836] was appointed Ambassador at that court; but he arrived too late to influence the negotiations at Bukharest. Meanwhile, Stratford Canning worked with equal diligence and success to persuade Russia to reduce her claims and the Turks to abate their pride and suspicion. Finally the Tsar’s dread of Napoleon and the Emperor’s fear of a union of Russia, Austria and France for the partition of Ottoman Empire, brought about a settlement in the Peace of Bucharest (May 28th, 1812). Turkey thereby ceded Bessarabia to Russia, retained her former frontier in Asia Minor and her rights in Serbia. The Treaty was ratified too late to enable the Russians to help in retaking Napoleon’s Moscow; but that delay contributed to the eventual success of the British, and, at the Beresina, of the French.

¹ F.O. Turkey (1812). Stratford Canning to Wellesley, 11 March 1812.

² F.O. Sweden, 72. The Duke of Södermanland to Castlereagh, 29 April 1812.

³ F.O. Turkey (1812). Stratford Canning to Castlereagh, 29 April 1812.

⁴ Zinkeisen, vii. 726; Lane-Poole, *op. cit.* p. 100.

Thenceforth, the retreat became a pitiable rout which encouraged the rally of the Prussian army of General Yorck to the Allied cause.

On the surface of these events, the eye beholds a vast efflux and reflux of armies, whose fate is decided less by the puny efforts of man than by the resistless powers of nature. But the trained imagination sees far more. It beholds the westward undertow of the Peninsular War, the weakening effect of the British naval blockade on all parts of Napoleon's empire and the thwarting of his attempts to capture Riga. It notes the efforts of British diplomacy to disengage Russia from the troublesome hostilities on her flanks and to convert Sweden and Turkey into Allies. Further, it recalls the unswerving efforts of Pitt, Grenville, Hawkesbury, Canning, Wellesley and Castlereagh to resist the territorial predominance of the French Revolution and of its heir, Napoleon. Those efforts were often unskilful, diffuse and wasteful. Their plans of European reconstruction were, also, in large measure artificial; for, in general, they were prompted by military considerations, and often erred in neglecting the interests of the peoples concerned. Yet Great Britain's Foreign Policy was honest and disinterested, when compared with that of her great antagonist and of her Allies. Externally imposing, his policy was marred by an unbounded selfishness. The conduct of the Central Powers was impaired by a petty egoism, a paralyzing jealousy, and by half-heartedness that faltered at the first great reverse. Hers were at least the virtues of constancy and doggedness. Her work was slow but it was sure. Finally, her efforts, often failing but ever renewed, enabled the Continental monarchs to gain wisdom from bitter experience, and, after Napoleon's ambition had overreached itself, to enter into a close union such as had formerly been impracticable. As they gathered together in the year 1813, they might have ascribed to her the lofty praise with which the shade of Anchises hailed the spirit of him who foiled the fiery genius of Hannibal:

*Tu Maximus ille es,
Unus qui nobis cunctando restituis rem.*

CHAPTER IV

THE PACIFICATION OF EUROPE, 1813-1815

I. FROM THE TREATY OF KALISCH TO THE END OF THE YEAR 1813

DURING the year 1812, Great Britain had been able to do little to influence the course of the struggle that was taking place on the Continent. What she could do she had, under the guidance of the new Cabinet, on the whole done promptly and well. The unremitting pressure of the Blockade had been continued unrelaxed despite the opening of the American War. The assistance which had been given to Russia in money and material had shown that such aid was always at the command of any Power which would attempt to throw off Napoleon's ascendancy. British diplomacy had been, also, employed to some effect in relieving Russia from the pressure of both Turkey and Sweden, and the latter Power was ready to become an active foe of Napoleon. At the same time, in the West, where sea power could give her a footing, Britain maintained her position. The steady improvement to the British and Portuguese armies had given solidity to the first grand coalition in the Peninsula, where greater success had been obtained than in any previous year. Sicily had, also, been kept free to serve as a base for attacks on Italy. But the main current of events was entirely outside the control of Great Britain; and she remained a mere spectator of the clash of forces on the Continent.

To some extent, this position is further maintained during the year 1813. In the great series of military and diplomatic events which changed Europe from an inert congeries of French vassals into a hostile Alliance whose armies were assembled on the French frontiers, British policy played only a subordinate part. She was, indeed, the paymaster of the Coalition. But a real voice in strategy or diplomacy could not be purchased by money alone. It needed military prestige and sea power gave to her statesmen, and these she was only just beginning to command after long years of fatal blundering. Moreover, for most of the year the centre of operations

was too far away for her statesmen to obtain any control over the bewilderingly rapid changes of situation on the Continent. It was not until 1814, when France itself became the scene of action, that the skilful diplomacy of Castlereagh was able to secure the position which her statesmen and people felt to be due to her proved power of resistance. Even in 1813, however, she played a more important and more successful part than in any previous Coalition against Napoleon, and, though she did not fully secure her objects, she prepared the way for the overwhelming success of the next year.

That this was so, was due to the fact that her statesmen had, at last, in some measure learnt by bitter experiences how to fight the Napoleonic Empire. The situation was, indeed, changed by the fact (which her Foreign Minister from the first perceived) that a national resistance was now being offered to Napoleon in the north of Europe. But his position was still far stronger than it had been in 1801 or in 1805, and if the forces arrayed against him were not more skilfully utilised than on previous occasions, it might be once more the fate of Great Britain to see the new Coalition dissolve as others had dissolved before. If British strength was again frittered away in useless expeditions and British diplomacy unable to secure the Coalition against the insidious methods which Napoleon knew so well how to employ, the result might yet be an Austerlitz and a Friedland, followed by a Peace as disastrous as that of Pressburg or Tilsit.

But the new Cabinet which had come into existence in 1810 contained men, mainly the pupils of Pitt, who, while lacking the ability or prestige of their master, had yet learnt much from his mistakes and proved themselves far more capable than their predecessors. Liverpool, who had become Prime-Minister after Perceval's assassination in June 1812, was a man of only moderate ability; but he possessed two great characteristics—a large experience, including nearly every Cabinet office, and an unflinching tact, which kept his Cabinet together and left the Opposition powerless. Castlereagh, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who had succeeded Wellesley in 1812, not only led the House of Commons with notable skill, but filled the most important office in the Cabinet as a pupil of Pitt, not less courageous than he was cautious and self-restrained. For this position Canning had been designed by Liverpool; and he could have secured it by a very slight exercise of self-subordination. But, though Canning would have brought to the Ministry imagination and brilliance, he would almost certainly have impaired its unity

and hence its efficiency. Bathurst, the Secretary of State for War, was completely conversant with his colleague's ideas, and was an experienced and energetic administrator. Both Vansittart, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Sidmouth, at the Home Office, were dull and self-opinionated; but they served their turn as strenuous supporters of the policy of their abler colleagues. Almost all the rest of the Cabinet, which included Lords Harrowby as Privy Seal, Eldon as Chancellor and Moulgrave at the Ordnance, were men of experience who, however mediocre in political ability, not merely gave the Ministry weight, but were Ministers who could be trusted to follow loyally where they could not lead. There were, also, in the minor offices several men of high ability, among them Huskisson and Palmerston, and the Earl of Clancarty. Certainly, Pitt had never been fortunate enough to possess a staff so competent and experienced, and, though his commanding genius was lacking, the triumvirate of Liverpool, Bathurst and Castlereagh, who controlled the main lines of foreign and military policy, included among them some gifts which Pitt lacked, while they had learnt from the faults as well as from the good qualities of their master¹. They were thus able to put Pitt's ideas into force only too successfully, when at last the opportunity came.

Of these three, Castlereagh was by far the ablest and, from 1814 onwards until his death, he obtained over British Foreign Policy a supremacy which he shared only with Wellington, who was to be so much by his side during the settlement of 1814-15. He won it not only by sheer hard work and force of character, but also by a sense of reality and a certain broadness of view which few of his Tory contemporaries possessed. He was, of course, blind to many things—as the War had settled and accepted all the articles of the Tory creed for which classes of Great Britain. But he applied it with caution and self-restraint to Continental affairs. The ideas which he had inherited from Pitt he endeavoured to apply to this new phase of the struggle, and he added to them a few expedients of his own. These we shall see appearing in the course of this year, and carried into some sort of fruition in the settlement that followed in 1814-15.

The influence of the Prince Regent himself was not negligible.

¹ All three had held the offices both of Foreign Minister and of Secretary of State for War, and the unity of political and military strategy obtained was doubtless partly due to this fact.

He gradually obtained a considerable knowledge of men and events, and his personal relations with the Sovereigns had some influence on events in 1814 and 1815. On the whole, he was entirely amenable to the advice of his Cabinet at this period; but the personal wishes of himself and some of his royal brothers on minor points were apt to cause inconvenience. The Prince Regent was, also, Sovereign of Hanover, and the interests of that country, which had proved so fatal to Pitt's schemes in 1805, were still an embarrassing charge upon his Ministers. Fortunately, Count Münster, who represented him in Hanoverian affairs, was shrewd and moderate in action, though imbued with the most intense reactionary views. He could always, in the last resort, be controlled by Castlereagh, who, at the same time, left him so far as possible the last word on such matters as the German Constitution, in which British Ministers were only indirectly interested. From Münster and other Hanoverian Ministers, such as Count Hardenberg at Vienna and L. von Ompteda, Castlereagh undoubtedly learnt much about Continental affairs which was of great use to him.

Castlereagh was but imperfectly served by his diplomatic subordinates. The curse of jobbery still lay heavy on all appointments. Castlereagh obeyed the natural instinct of the British aristocracy in putting his relations, friends and the friends of his political associates into all the good jobs that lay in his patronage. Seniority counted for something, good men might possibly be rewarded after many years, and actual incompetence was not tolerated; but far too many of Castlereagh's subordinates were connexions of himself and his colleagues, who had obtained their position for this reason. Further, as always at the close of a great war, military and diplomatic functions were not clearly distinguished. Castlereagh's representatives were sometimes soldiers who combined a dual function—and soldiers, unless they are exceptional men, do not often make good diplomatists. From this cause, also, it resulted that Castlereagh was represented in Italy at a most critical period of our relations, by a fierce Whig like Lord William Bentinck. For years, of course, the profession of English diplomacy in Europe had almost been suspended, since diplomatic relations had practically ceased to exist with the majority of European States. Inferior agents, half-diplomatists, half-spies, like King or Horn, were the only links connecting the British Government with Continental Courts. Castlereagh was lucky enough to find Sir Henry Wellesley at Cadiz, and Stratford Canning temporarily

in charge at Constantinople. For the rest, until Clancarty came to help him at Vienna, he had no one but untrained mediocrities in his principal missions. Over these he had, however, so far as time and distance allowed, a complete control. He had moreover their loyal support and complete confidence, and to many of them he could write with great intimacy, though he rarely revealed all he was aiming at. He handled a difficult team, half-amateurs, with great tact. He praised freely and, when he had to censure, he generally knew how to gild the pill. On the whole, he was too kind to them; but they repaid him with a real devotion which made them sometimes better instruments of his policy than abler men would have been. At the outset, Castlereagh lacked, like all British statesmen, any real knowledge of the statesmen of other countries. He and his colleagues had been cut off from the Continent, and the new men that were now rising to power were known to them only by gossip and very imperfect reports. Aberdeen, so late as the autumn of 1813, had to explain to Castlereagh that Metternich was not an old man.¹ It was only because, in 1814 and 1815, Castlereagh went himself to the Continent and became acquainted with all the principal figures in European diplomacy, that he was able to attain to that intimate touch with affairs which he afterwards displayed.

The new situation, brought about far by the complete destruction of Napoleon's army in Russia, was only overt by the complete destruction of and the events that immediately followed gradually understood in England, British diplomacy, while securing its character, did not anticipate. in the War on the Continent, had the character, and for an active participation than Prussia, though little had been penetrated on Austria rather described as the imperial Government, and blind to what Liverpool secret mission of Lord Walpole, Charles of the Tory policy? Nor had the Petrograd, to Vienna (December 1813) of three-quarters of the Secretary of Embassy at result but vague assurances from Metternich which January 1814 produced any sador had to withdraw to the country ideas which the British Amba- presence there. The Treaty of Kalisch his new phantoms and the discovery of his of his own Napoleon's discovery of his restored to a position at least equivalent, and carried between Russia and Prussia, 1805, was made without reference to ed in 1814-15. The latter Power was of course, once the die was cast, appa- it himself with the fact that she had held in

¹ Lord Stanmore, *Life of Lord Aberdeen*.

² December 22nd, 1812. Liverpool to

money and material, in both of which she was sorely lacking. The news of her action, however, at once opened a prospect of an entire change in the European situation; and Castlereagh had, for the first time since his acceptance of office in June, to formulate his principles of action.

The main lines of policy which he was to follow in these years were laid down for him by history and tradition. They comprised, first of all, the maintenance of the colonial and maritime supremacy of Great Britain which, despite the unexpected rebuffs received by her in the American War, was now absolutely established. Not only were all the French Colonies now hers, but also the Dutch and Danish. In fact, the only overseas possessions not under her control were the South-American Colonies of her Allies, Spain and Portugal, and with those of the former now in revolt against the mother-country, she was rapidly establishing commercial relations—a far wiser and more lucrative policy than the schemes, at one time seriously considered, of bringing them under her own rule. She thus had in her hands an immense dominion, which she could keep as pledge for the Continental settlement. It was already clear that those portions of it which were regarded as vital to her maritime strategy she intended to retain; but the rest remained as a means at her disposal for securing such a Continental peace as she desired, and provided her with a diplomatic weapon of great value. Even more sensitive were British statesmen as to the "Maritime Rights" of Great Britain. For these, she was, even now at the height of her struggle with Napoleon, waging war with the United States. The principal champion of Neutral Rights on the Continent had been Russia, now her Ally, and it was not difficult to see that Napoleon would, if he could, try to bring this matter under discussion. It was, therefore, always a cardinal point of British policy to exclude any discussion of British rights on this head from the negotiations as to the European settlement, and this point was easily gained.

But Britain had obligations to Allies on which she was not so free to obtain an honourable peace. Most important of these were the promises to restore complete freedom to Spain as Italy at a most critical period had also been guaranteed to the Neapolitan King. Lord William Bentinck, lately expected to be restored to Naples by English diplomacy in Europe, had received the promise of Norway in diplomatic relations had practice on the Continent. Throughout the negotiations were made *a sine qua non* of peace with European States. Inferior negotiations were the only King or Horn, were the only element with Continental Courts. Sir Henry Wellesley.

Thirdly, Great Britain had to consider the political arrangement of the Continent. It had been her consistent policy to try to erect a barrier to the overwhelming power of France. How far the destruction of the Napoleonic empire would proceed, it was impossible to say. Even at this moment in England, there were some who hoped to reduce France to her ancient limits¹. But such a result must depend on the resolution and skill of the European Powers, and few hoped that they would succeed so far. On this point, therefore, Great Britain depended on her Allies. She could not force them to go further than they wished. But, throughout, she encouraged them to go as far as possible, hoping to use her Colonial conquests as a means to drive back the power of France from the centre of Europe.

Lastly, when the final settlement came to be made, much of Castlereagh's energy was to be expended in endeavouring to force on the rest of the world the great reform that had been carried in Great Britain by the short-lived Whig Ministry—the Abolition of the Slave-trade, devotion to which public opinion, inspired by the efforts of Wilberforce and Clarkson, now made essential to the popularity, and even to the existence of a British Cabinet.

Bound by these considerations, which were imposed by the necessity of the case on all British Cabinets, Castlereagh drew up his Instructions at the beginning of April 1813, on the news of the Treaty of Kalisch. They were addressed to Earl Cathcart, special British representative at Alexander's headquarters, who had been sent to Russia in 1812. A soldier turned diplomatist, he was entirely fitted for the important position which he now held. Even in military matters, he was unable to obtain satisfactory intelligence, while he never understood clearly the political and financial affairs which he had to handle. Already over middle age, "*le vieux général diplomate*," as George Jackson called him, lacked energy as well as ability. He fell under Alexander's influence, and no one could have been more unsuited to the task of interpreting the subtle and rapidly shifting diplomacy of 1813 to his distant chief. His rank and courage, and the confidence of his bearing, alone enabled him to maintain his position. In April, Castlereagh sent out in a similar capacity to Prussian headquarters Lord Stewart, his own half-brother. Like Cathcart, he was a soldier and had been Wellington's Adjutant-general. But the Duke, while very friendly to him, was far too shrewd a judge of men to accede to his fervent wish to command a cavalry division. Stewart had some

five millions, not to be redeemed before July 1st, 1815, or six months after a treaty of peace had been signed. In return, Russia was to be asked to supply 200,000, and Prussia 100,000, men. Political considerations were only mentioned in so far as the whole scheme was to depend on concessions to Hanover, to which, owing to the pressure from the Prince Regent and Münster, Prussia was now called upon to cede the enclaves of Hildesheim, Minden and Ravensberg, as she had promised in 1802¹. The connexion between Hanover and Great Britain, which had ruined Pitt's diplomacy in the Third Coalition, was still to cause great inconvenience; but, as will be seen, Castlereagh was successful in relegating it to a subordinate place, and even derived some advantages from it. Far more anxious was he to obtain in the Treaty an Alliance which should be able to withstand the arms and diplomacy of Napoleon. "The official assurances," he wrote in the Instructions, "already interchanged between Great Britain and Russia not to treat for peace except in concert should be reduced into a formal shape, Prussia being included, and the three Powers should engage to unite their arms and their councils with a view to such arrangements as may be best calculated to secure the independency of Europe²." Castlereagh did not enter into the details of these arrangements. We are in no doubt, however, as to the principles on which he intended to found his policy for the reconstruction of Europe. In a private letter to Cathcart accompanying the despatch, he referred the Emperor to Pitt's reply to the Instructions of Novossiltsoff on which the Third Coalition was founded. The important paper in which Pitt had then replied to Alexander's grandiose schemes for a new Europe, in which a reestablished Balance of Power should be protected by a specially constructed alliance, was the basis of the policy which Castlereagh was now to endeavour to pursue³. But he did not yet wish to commit himself.

"The political arrangement of Europe," he wrote, "in a larger sense is more difficult at this early moment to decide on. So much depends on events, that it is perhaps better not to be too prompt in encountering litigated questions. The main features we are agreed upon—that, to keep France in order, we require great masses—that Prussia, Austria and Russia ought to be as great and powerful as they have ever been—and that the

¹ Castlereagh to Cathcart, April 9th, 1813; Oncken, *op. cit.* II, 691; Webster, *British Diplomacy*, 1813-15, p. 2.

² Oncken, *op. cit.* II, 690.

³ Castlereagh to Cathcart, April 8th, 1813. *Castlereagh Correspondence*, VIII, 356. Pitt's despatch is given in the Appendix to *British Diplomacy*. See also *supra*, Chapter III, pp. 335-37.

inferior States must be summoned to assist or pay the forfeit of resistance. I see many inconveniences in premature conclusions, but we ought not to be unprepared."

Castlereagh was right in not expecting too much on these questions. Through the whole of 1813, he was to press for a comprehensive alliance, which should give him such a peace as Pitt had outlined in 1805, and at the same time contain some permanent guarantee as to its continuance. To Castlereagh mere subsidy treaties, negotiated with the Powers separately, were not enough. He wished for a treaty combining all the Powers at war in a bond which Napoleon would be unable to break by a sweeping victory or a subtle piece of diplomacy. But, though the Allied armies and the diplomacy of Metternich secured the triumph of his cause, throughout 1813 the British Ambassadors proved quite unable to secure such a treaty. And, when the Allied forces were assembled on the Rhine, the "federal bond," as Castlereagh conceived it, was still lacking.

These Instructions, with which Lord Stewart reached Allied Headquarters in April, resulted in the Treaties of Reichenbach, which were not concluded until June 14th, by which time they were already out of date. Only three meetings could be held in the days from May 5th to 24th between the two Ambassadors and the Prussian and Russian statesmen, though Lord Stewart, to his great mortification, missed the battle of Lützen by his endeavour to transact a little business. Prussia was very stiffnecked as to the cessions to Hanover, and it was with great difficulty that Stewart obtained a promise of the cession of Hildesheim. Hardenberg had even the audacity to hint that he would appeal to public opinion in England, always jealous of using British money to promote Hanoverian interests. Prussia, also, insisted on a clause guaranteeing her restoration to a position equivalent to that which she occupied in 1806, such as she had already obtained from Russia in the Treaty of Kalisch. There were great difficulties in arranging the methods of payment, both of the subsidies and the "Federative paper" (specially guaranteed paper money); and the exact quota of men each Power should be required to furnish caused considerable discussion. Thus, though the two Powers were eager to get their money, the Treaties were not signed till June 14th. With the exception of a clause that no separate negotiations should be entered into with the enemy the stipulations as to Prussia and Hanover were the only political points contained in them.

Before this, however, the diplomatic situation had completely changed. Beaten, but not overwhelmingly so, at Lützen and Bautzen, the Allies had accepted Napoleon's offer of an armistice and secured favourable terms at Pläswitz (June 4th, 1813). In concluding this Armistice, no reference had been made to the British Ambassadors, and no stipulation had been added as to the Spanish War. More serious, however, were the negotiations with Austria. Metternich had now completed his plans for the offer of armed mediation, which was accepted by the Allies as soon as the armistice was signed. The tortuous negotiations by which Metternich accomplished the transition from Alliance with Napoleon to Alliance with his enemies still remain difficult to follow, and their various stages have been much a matter of dispute among historians. They were certainly only very imperfectly understood by the British Ambassadors, who were only partially informed as to events. So soon as it was clear that Russia intended to prosecute the War in the centre of Europe, Metternich had perforce to choose his line of action. With wonderful skill, he maintained negotiations both with Napoleon and the Allies for over six months, before he finally declared himself, and so subtly did he ring the changes that Napoleon never completely penetrated his designs, while the Allies were not sure of him until almost at the moment when the Austrian armies joined them. In a sense, Austrian policy remained undecided to the last moment, and, though Metternich himself may, as he afterwards claimed, have seen clearly that his negotiations could have but one end, there is much to be said for the view that he really desired a peace, which, while strengthening Austria and Prussia, would leave neither France nor Russia, whose designs on Poland he soon discovered, in a position to overawe the Austrian dominions.

In any case, it was his policy to elude the proposals of Russia and Prussia by proffering his good offices to effect a peace between them and Napoleon. This offer he also made to Great Britain, whither he despatched Wessenberg in the early months of 1813. The Austrian Envoy was, however, coldly received by the Government, and the Press, in publishing the news of his mission, was vehement in its denunciation of a Power regarded as entirely subservient to Napoleon. The Austrian overture which suggested that the British Ministers might help to make a Continental peace by offering to give up the maritime conquests, though it made no specific proposals as to the main lines of such a peace, was, therefore, naturally rejected by them. The rejection was made even more certain by a passage in Napoleon's

speech in the Legislative Assembly, which was intentionally inserted for that purpose. The overture was, accordingly, not merely rejected; it was refused with indignation¹.

This rebuff was however used by Metternich with great adroitness. Instead of, as Napoleon had hoped, forcing him to take the French side, he used it as an excuse to substitute a policy of armed mediation instead of mere peaceful good offices. If Austria was disregarded, it was necessary for her to make herself respected, to increase her armaments and to insist upon peace by a threat of force. It was difficult for Napoleon, when about to enter on a struggle with the joint Prussian and Russian armies, to resent this policy as he would have liked to have done. Metternich was, therefore, free to increase his military preparations without concealment, while, at the same time, he renewed his secret negotiations with Alexander. These went so far, under the influence of Stadion, who was head of the anti-French party, that on May 16th he obtained from Alexander, through that Envoy, his terms for the settlement of Europe, which insisted on French withdrawal, not merely from Germany, but from Italy also.

The battle of Bautzen (May 22nd) and the acceptance of Napoleon's offer of the Armistice (June 4th) made Austria hesitate. The moment had now come when she must declare her terms; but she was not prepared to go so far as Alexander desired. In the early days of June, Metternich and Francis went to Gitschin in Bohemia, to be near the Allied headquarters; and here Nesselrode obtained a statement of Austria's position. She was prepared to go to war against Napoleon, unless he granted four conditions: (1) the dissolution of the Duchy of Warsaw; (2) the enlargement of Prussia, including the restoration to her of Danzig; (3) the return of the Illyrian provinces to Austria, and (4) the freeing of the Hanseatic Towns. Two other points Metternich was prepared to state that he regarded as of high importance, viz. the restoration of Prussia, as far as possible, to her position in 1805, and the dissolution of the Confederation of the Rhine. But he would not promise to make these last two conditions absolute. Nevertheless, Alexander was so convinced that Austria really meant to come in on the Allied side that, on June 14th, he agreed to the Austrian conditions, and Metternich was allowed, if he chose, to propose a Mediation to Napoleon on these terms.

Meanwhile, the British Ambassadors had been almost entirely ignored in these negotiations. Their Subsidy Treaties had been signed

¹ Castlereagh to Cathcart, April 9th, 1813. *Castlereagh Correspondence*, VIII. 359.

in draft before they were told of the Armistice, and, though the Emperor informed them before the formal completion of the Treaty, it was too late for them to express an opinion. Cathcart accepted this position easily enough; but Stewart, though he considered the Armistice as justifiable, was soon rendered suspicious and indignant at the practical exclusion of the British Plenipotentiaries from the important negotiations which were in progress. Hardenberg defended the negotiation on the ground that, while Prussia had bound herself not to make peace except in concert with her Ally, yet she remained at liberty to communicate with a neutral the grounds on which she would be prepared to sign peace¹; and he justified the whole transaction on the ground that Prussia and Russia had no option but to accede to Austria's terms. On June 21st, Hardenberg informed Stewart that Austria and Prussia had consented to send negotiators to Prague, who were however not to deal direct with the French Plenipotentiaries, but only through Metternich, and tried to reassure him by explaining that Metternich's policy was only to lure Napoleon on to expose himself, and that there was no prospect of peace. But, in all these transactions, there was no mention of those points to which Britain attached the greatest importance; while, though information was given to the British representatives after the transaction, no communication was made in time for any influence on affairs to be exerted by them². Stewart, however, despite his pessimism, had no love for so tedious a business as the negotiations. He went off to the north, to inspect the Swedish troops, leaving Jackson with Cathcart to survey and report the course of events. None of the British Envoys were, however, informed that the arrangements between Austria and the Allies had been put into treaty form by the Treaty of Reichenbach, signed on June 27th after Metternich's departure. This step was kept secret from them at the express desire of Metternich, probably because he was anxious that no news of it should leak out, until his negotiations with Napoleon were completed.

¹ Stewart to Castlereagh, June 16th, 1813. F.O. Prussia, 87. *British Diplomacy*, p. 67. Information was sent to Castlereagh also in a despatch to Jacob dated June 14th.

² Cathcart was, however, informed of Nesselrode's mission to Gitschin, and he offered to supply the money necessary for any bribes that would help the negotiations. Cathcart to Castlereagh, June 1st, 1813; "Being well assured that no endeavour would be spared by B. P. to draw the councils of Austria to his interest, I advised H.L.M. to have recourse to every expedient; and knowing the absolute want of means in the Department of Secret Service, I thought it right in giving this advice to offer to make good any engagement in that way by which a determination to act in concert might be obtained and Count Nesselrode is authorized and instructed accordingly." F.O. Supplementary, 343; *British Diplomacy*, p. 4.

Meanwhile, on the news of the attitude of Austria at the end of May reaching England, Castlereagh had, for his part, determined to press her to declare herself. Cathcart was ordered by an Instruction of June 30th to demand an "explicit avowal of her sentiments and determination," and to offer her a credit of £500,000 immediately for her preliminary preparations, if she determined to come in. Before this Instruction reached Cathcart, however, Metternich was hurrying off to Dresden to meet Napoleon, so that it exercised but little influence on the course of events¹. The news of the Armistice and the basis agreed upon by the Allied Powers produced at first no fresh Instruction from Castlereagh; for, as he confessed, he was powerless to say anything when Spain was deliberately left out of the negotiations. At the beginning of July, however, news came both to London and to the negotiating Powers of the battle of Vittoria and the virtual destruction of Napoleon's power in Spain. The news, as will be seen, had an important effect on the negotiations at Prague and Reichenbach; but it also produced a fresh set of Instructions from Castlereagh, dated July 5th². In these, while promising that Wellington's army would not relax its efforts, he stated that the British Government would leave to the Continental Powers the initiative in arranging the Continental Peace. On Four Points, however, he declared, Great Britain could not compromise because bound by Treaty, viz. the independence of Spain, Portugal and Sicily, and the British engagements to Sweden. Further, Great Britain was ready, "in conjunction with her Allies," to insist "as absolutely necessary to lay the foundation of some counterpoise in the centre of Europe," on "the restoration of the Austrian and Prussian Monarchies to such an extent of power and consequence as may enable them to maintain such a counterpoise"; while the independence of Holland and Hanover was regarded as equally necessary. Lastly, Castlereagh urged as a demand, in his view important, but on which the Allies must decide, "the restoration of the rest of Germany, including Switzerland and Italy, to an order of things more consonant to the common safety." He admitted that the extent to which these matters could be pressed depended on whether Austria joined the Alliance, but promised the full support of Great Britain to Russia and Prussia, "so long as they would stand by each other and the cause of the Continent against France."

¹ Castlereagh to Cathcart, June 30, 1813. F.O. Russia, 83; *British Diplomacy*, p. 5.

² Oncken, *op. cit.* II. 702.

This statement was followed, eight days later, by two other Instructions¹ which were undoubtedly meant to conciliate Austria. In the first place, the Armed Mediation was formally accepted, and, secondly, a statement was made, though in general terms only, of the principles on which Great Britain was prepared to surrender her Colonial conquests. Of these, Castlereagh said, some must be kept, and, while the Dutch Colonies might be restored, if Holland regained her independence, and the Danish used to facilitate the Swedish arrangements, the French Colonies would only be returned if a satisfactory Continental peace was secured, on conditions which, it was indicated quite clearly, must be more consonant with British ideas than the Four Points which Metternich had consented to make his test for declaring war. Castlereagh thus still reserved some control over the negotiations; for he could still refuse to make concessions on the Colonial conditions, if an unsatisfactory peace was proposed, while Metternich still lacked one weapon indispensable for his becoming complete master of the situation, if Napoleon showed himself really inclined to treat for peace².

It is now known that Napoleon had not the slightest intention of treating for peace on any terms that could be accepted by the Allies; but, for six weeks longer, the issue appeared to hang in the balance, and more than once Austrian policy veered towards a pacific settlement. Metternich had set out for the famous interview at Dresden on June 24th, leaving Stadion to sign, on the 27th, the Treaty of Reichenbach between Russia and Prussia, which put in treaty form the arrangements already agreed upon by the three Powers. At Dresden, Metternich produced no terms of peace, but succeeded, after two stormy interviews, in inducing Napoleon to accept a meeting between French and Allied negotiators at Prague under his mediation (June 30th). At the same time, an extension of the Armistice to August 10th was agreed upon—an interval which both Metternich and Napoleon desired, in order to complete their military preparations, and which Russia and Prussia had, therefore, perforce to accept.

No sooner had this been settled than the news of *Vittoria* reached Dresden and, in a few days, Reichenbach. It did nothing to shake the Emperor's resolution; but its effect on Austrian policy was, no doubt,

¹ Castlereagh to Cathcart (nos. 45 and 46), July 13th, 1813. *F.O. Russia*, 83; *British Diplomacy*, pp. 12-13.

² As a further concession to Russia, Castlereagh was, also, now ready, though still persisting in refusing Russian mediation, to negotiate for peace directly with the United States, and Russia was asked to support this offer. See p. 532.

considerable. Jackson had no hesitation in declaring that it was the determining factor in Metternich's decisions, while Stewart wrote from Stralsund: "Wellington will save Europe yet." They exaggerated. Even after the receipt of this news, it is clear that there still existed a large Austrian peace party and that Metternich was not uninfluenced by it. He was, perhaps, more moved by the offers which Cathcart, after the receipt of Castlereagh's Instructions of July 5th, made to him of an immediate sum of money; for the Austrian finances were in a deplorable state. At any rate, by the end of July all reports tended to show that Austria would fight, unless Napoleon made immense concessions. At Trachenberg, as early as July 12th, the Russian and Prussian military leaders had already, with the assistance of Bernadotte, drawn up a plan of campaign, which involved the co-operation of the Austrian army in Bohemia. The so-called Congress of Prague, meanwhile, for which the French Envoys, after serious delay in arriving, were unable to obtain any Instructions at all from their master, gradually revealed the fact that Napoleon had no intention of treating. On August 7th Metternich put an end to the farce by at last producing his peace terms in the form of an ultimatum to Napoleon. The fact that he included all the six points agreed upon, and not merely the Four Points *sine quibus non* of the Reichenbach Treaty, showed that he had now fully determined on war. Napoleon was not prepared to reply in time; and, on August 12th, the news was signalled to the waiting armies on the Bohemian frontier, that Austria had declared war. Yet, even now, Metternich's reply (August 21st) to Maret's insulting Note of August 18th, which repeated the offer of a Congress, was studiously moderate and left him with the opportunity of reopening negotiations with Napoleon at any time that suited his own diplomacy. He avoided any specific refusal by pleading the necessity of referring to his Allies; and a copy of the Note was sent to London.

The fact, therefore, that, in this long series of negotiations, British interests had played an entirely subordinate part, made no difference to the ultimate settlement. How far there was a danger of a "Continental" peace, leaving Great Britain to accept the situation, may be doubted. The suspicion, certainly, occurred to her representatives and was duly reported¹. Undoubtedly, if Napoleon had possessed any sense of the reality of the situation he might have obtained terms

¹ E.g. Jackson to Stewart, August 2nd, 1813. F.O. Prussia, 88; *British Diplomacy*, p. 74.

far more favourable than British statesmen, or even Alexander, desired. It is true that Russia and Prussia were bound by Treaties to Great Britain; but Metternich was free, except for the Four Points, and it cannot be gainsaid that the Allies were in no position to withstand the threat of his intervention against them, while even Austrian neutrality left them in a very dangerous position. Castlereagh could indeed fall back upon the Colonial conquests; but he would have found it difficult to resist a peace, if Metternich had declared it to be one which Austria would support. Even now that Austria had joined the Alliance, was it so welded together that it could withstand defeat in one big battle? And what guarantee was there that, if Napoleon was forced to conclude a peace, it would not be, once more, merely a truce until he had recovered his power, and until some incident had divided the Eastern Powers? These were the questions which Castlereagh was asking himself, when he received news, four weeks old, of the negotiations at Reichenbach, Prague and Trachenberg. He hoped that, at least, the points which he had urged in his despatches of July 5th and 13th would have been taken into consideration by the Allies, and he pressed urgently that Spain should not be left out of sight in laying down the preliminary basis¹.

It was, however, now indispensable to come into closer touch with Austria. Whether the negotiations continued or hostilities were resumed, it was obvious that the key to the position lay at Vienna. Accordingly, at the beginning of August, it was determined to send out a special Mission to the Austrian Court; and to this important post Castlereagh nominated the young Earl of Aberdeen, to whom for some time the Tory Ministry had been anxious to give official employment. His Instructions, dated August 6th, show how far Castlereagh was prepared to go to win Austria over. As to his general attitude towards Continental affairs, Aberdeen was to follow the Instructions already sent to Stewart and Cathcart; but Austria's special interests in Italy were dealt with in two separate despatches. In the first of these, the importance of concluding a convention with Murat, whom Castlereagh thought to be still in Italy, was emphasised, and reference was made to the fact that he had already made overtures both to Austria and to Great Britain. In this despatch, it was suggested that Murat should be given compensation in the centre of Italy, so that Ferdinand might be restored to his kingdom. In a separate despatch, however, Castlereagh agreed that Murat might

¹ Castlereagh to Cathcart, August 7th, 1813. *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ix. 39.

retain Naples, if he made it a *sine qua non*, compensation being found for Ferdinand, and Aberdeen was authorised to sign a convention to that effect *sub spe rati*. As will be seen, this second Instruction, which Castlereagh only intended to be used in the last resort, was to have important consequences. On the more general question, likewise, Castlereagh made no secret of his anxiety to see Austria "resume its preponderance in the North of Italy" including the territory of Venice¹.

For the rest, Castlereagh let events take their course, until he received definite information early in September, that Austria had joined the Allies. The risks British interests had run during the recent negotiations now determined him to take a step which appears to have been in his mind throughout the year, and for which he now thought the time was ripe. On September 18th he forwarded new Instructions to the Continent, which went deeply into the main issues of the conflict and put forward an entirely new view of the Alliance against Napoleon. They opened with a review of the nature of the Confederacy arrayed against France, which Castlereagh claimed was distinguished from all previous combinations, "by the number and magnitude of the Powers engaged" not less than "by the national character which the war has assumed throughout the respective states. On former occasions it was a contest of Sovereigns in some instances perhaps against the prevailing sentiment of their subjects. It is now a struggle dictated by the feelings of the people of all ranks as well as by the necessity of the case." The Sovereigns of Europe, having at last learnt the dangers of isolation, were now bound together, for the first time, by a consciousness of common danger. Their only chance of safety was not to allow any offer of the enemy to divide them. The War in Spain and the War in Germany were one, and, if the Allies held together and persevered, they must in the long run triumph. But, though the Powers had concluded a number of separate Treaties with one another, there was as yet no common Instrument, and even so essential a point as the independence of Spain had not yet been agreed to by the Allies as a whole, though Russia and Prussia were morally bound to support that claim, and Austria now presumably also, since she had agreed to fight for the objects laid down on May 16th, among which Spanish independence was expressly stipu-

¹ Castlereagh to Aberdeen (nos. 2, 3 and separate), August 6th, 1813. F.O. Austria, 101; *British Diplomacy*, pp. 94-97. The "most secret and separate" despatch appears to have been unknown to historians, and has caused much confusion in dealing with the later policy towards Murat.

lated. Castlereagh, also, indicated quite clearly that the Congress of Prague had occasioned great uneasiness to the British Cabinet, and, while professing the fullest confidence that Russia and Prussia had not contemplated signing a separate peace, pointed out that, supposing Napoleon had accepted the Austrian basis, the Armistice must have been prolonged, for the purpose of ascertaining the views of the British Cabinet, with perhaps disastrous results in the Peninsula. Castlereagh therefore pressed for a new Public Treaty, in which the Powers bound themselves not to make peace or to conclude any convention except in common. The Spanish Cortes, Portugal and Sicily, the principal Allies of Great Britain, were to be invited to accede to it. The ideas of the State Paper of 1805 are, however, specially perceptible in two clauses designed to make the Treaty a permanent part of the Public Law of Europe. They stipulate

That, after Peace shall be concluded by common consent, there shall continue between the said High Contracting Parties a perpetual Defensive Alliance for the maintenance of such Peace and for the mutual Protection of their respective States;

and

That in case of attack hereafter by France or any one of the said High Contracting Parties, the several Powers will support the Party so attacked with all their forces if necessary, and see justice done¹.

This was the first statement of the policy which Castlereagh was to carry through, six months later, at Chaumont. He was aware that such a measure necessitated an agreement among the Powers on the general principles of the Peace which it was intended to secure. He suggested, therefore, that Secret Articles should be attached to the Treaty, in which the objects of the Allies should be clearly specified, and a suggested draft of these Articles was also enclosed. They were based on the Russo-Prussian demands of May 16th, which Castlereagh assumed Austria to be now ready to sign; but he made additions to them specially safeguarding the points in which Great Britain had a special interest, but which had hitherto been neglected. Of these, Norway, Naples (or compensation to Sicily) and the restoration of the House of Brunswick were in the zone of the demands. But Castlereagh, also, added the provision of an "adequate Barrier" for Holland, which meant abandoning the Rhine frontier.

¹ Castlereagh to Cathcart, September 18th, 1813. F.O. Russia, 83; *British Diplomacy*, p. 19.

Otherwise, the Treaty would have left France with her "natural limits" of the Rhine, the Alps and the Pyrenees¹.

He seems scarcely to have been aware of the difficulty of carrying out these Instructions and of the inadequacy of his subordinates for securing so important an Instrument. In private letters to Cathcart², he urged the importance of pressing the matter forward, so that Parliament, which was to meet on November 4th, could be informed and the Cabinet take the Treaty into consideration in planning the campaign of 1814. He anticipated that Austria would be the most likely Power to offer opposition, and he devoted a special letter to arguments likely to convince Metternich that no adequate peace could be made, unless his policy was accepted. Before the Instructions arrived, however—and it was two days after the battle of Leipzig that Cathcart received them—further negotiations had taken place among the Allied Powers. At the headquarters of the main Allied army in Bohemia, the two Emperors and the Prussian King, with their Ministers, were now assembled, and in the intervals of discussing the Allied strategy they drew up new Treaties to regulate their political conduct. They were accompanied by Cathcart and Stewart. When the latter returned from his northern journey, he discovered the existence of the Treaty of Reichenbach of June 27th, and wrote off furious protests to his Court. Hardenberg made a great favour of even showing it him, and justified the breach of faith by the absolute necessity of agreeing to Metternich's conditions at this stage. Jackson was not slow to point out that he had suspected the Treaty, but that Hardenberg had positively denied it. Stewart drew from the whole transaction confirmation of the suspicions he had repeatedly expressed of Austria's conduct during the course of the Armistice, and maintained his conviction that, had Napoleon accepted the Four Points, Austria would have brought about a peace substantially on those terms³.

Metternich, who was now the arbiter of the Allied diplomacy, nevertheless took pains to put himself on the best terms with the British Envoys. In interviews with Stewart and Cathcart, he said that he knew himself to be distrusted by the British Cabinet; but that throughout the period of his subserviency to France he had always

¹ Castlereagh to Cathcart, September 18th, 1813. F.O. Russia, 83; *British Diplomacy*, p. 25.

² Castlereagh to Cathcart, September 18th and 21st, 1813. F.O. Supplementary, 343; *British Diplomacy*, pp. 27, 29.

³ Stewart to Castlereagh, August 12th and August 20th, 1813; Jackson to Stewart, August 12th; Hardenberg to Stewart, August 20th. F.O. Prussia, 89; *British Diplomacy*, pp. 76-78.

had in view the situation in which he now found himself. These efforts still left Stewart suspicious, though Cathcart (as ever) was fully satisfied. It was for Lord Aberdeen, however, that Metternich reserved his greatest efforts, and in a short time he had established a commanding influence over the British Plenipotentiary. Aberdeen, then only twenty-nine years of age, had been the ward of Dundas and of Pitt, in whose house he had often lived. He was a far more able and cultured man than either of his colleagues, and the favour that Pitt had shown him, as well as his own good qualities and high rank, had caused him at a very early age to be marked out by the Tory Ministry for office. He had, more than once, refused high diplomatic appointments. At last, doubtless partly owing to the death of his wife in 1812, he acceded to the urgent requests of Castlereagh and other Ministers to undertake the mission to the Austrian Court. His shy and reserved character, his moderation and breadth of view and the Liberal principles and peace-loving disposition which distinguished him always from his partisan colleagues and made him at a later stage the valued confidant of Peel, might have exercised considerable influence on the course of events, had he known more of the pitfalls of diplomatic intercourse. But he was absolutely without experience, and, though not without knowledge of European politics, he was far too academic and unskilled to penetrate the complicated situation presented to him. Castlereagh treated him with studied courtesy, and kept him by his side till Peace was made. But Aberdeen was ill at ease with men like Cathcart and Stewart, and never gave them his full confidence. In a very short space of time, admitted daily to the Imperial table, and treated with infinite tact by the Austrian Minister, he saw only with the eyes of Metternich. Another disturbing factor was, that he also fell under the influence of Sir Robert Wilson, who was aiming at establishing himself as Military Representative at Austrian headquarters, and saw in Aberdeen a means of overthrowing the determined hostility of Cathcart. Wilson was, also, flattered by the Austrians, and, as he upheld views of a speedy peace which, whatever their ultimate intention, were in direct opposition to those of the British Cabinet, the result was to make Aberdeen's arrival a source of weakness rather than strength to British diplomacy, and to increase the ascendancy of Metternich over the whole course of the negotiations. At the same time, it is to be remembered that Aberdeen was specially instructed to pursue a line of close confidence in Metternich.

"I am inclined to think," wrote Castlereagh, "it is best to make a Hero of him and by giving him a reputation to excite him to sustain it.... If you deem it useful you may tell him from me, I am perfectly ready to adopt him upon his own avowal, and to meet vigorous exertion on his part with perfect goodwill and confidence on mine—and that, as long as he will wield the great Machine in his hands with determination and spirit, I will support him as zealously as I have done the Prince Royal against all his calumniators, and I hope not less successfully¹."

One of Aberdeen's first tasks was to communicate to Metternich the fact that, during the course of the Armistice, Great Britain had accepted Austrian mediation. This had hitherto been studiously concealed from Austria at the urgent request of Alexander, and the disclosure was now made with sufficient tact to relegate the incident to oblivion. Aberdeen's communication of the points of interest to Great Britain, in which besides making Spain an absolute condition of policy, he urged the independence of Holland and Hanover as absolutely necessary, and the freeing of Germany and Italy as very desirable, came too late to produce any effect on the Treaty of Töplitz between Austria, Russia and Prussia, which was signed four days after his arrival at headquarters.

As to Murat, Aberdeen was surprised to find that he was at Dresden in an important command. After Bautzen and Lützen, Murat had, indeed, felt himself no longer able to resist Napoleon's summons. But his troops remained in his kingdom and gave no assistance to the Viceroy, while neither he nor his Queen ever broke off relations with the Austrian Court. In these circumstances, Metternich had little difficulty in inducing Aberdeen, not only to inform him immediately of the whole of his Instructions, but also to furnish him in writing with a statement that he was authorised to treat with Murat on the basis of Naples being retained by its *de facto* ruler.

In the Treaties of Töplitz, which were only communicated to the British Envoys a week after they were signed, no mention was made either of Spain, Holland, Italy or Norway. The British Ambassadors, however, professed themselves as satisfied with explanations that no peace would be made without Great Britain's claims being taken into account. Metternich went no further in his Subsidy Treaty with Great Britain, signed on October 9th, which was confined merely to a promise not to make peace except in common. Meanwhile, though

¹ Castlereagh to Aberdeen, September 21st, 1813. *F.O. Austria*, 101; *British Diplomacy*, p. 97.

it was apparent that negotiations would only be resumed when the issue of the autumn campaign was known, Metternich was building up a diplomatic basis by which his own ascendancy over events could be preserved. If, indeed, Murat had for the moment returned to his old allegiance, Metternich was now tempting Bavaria to desert. This "spirit of negotiation," as Castlereagh termed it, on which Aberdeen's colleagues were not slow in commenting, caused great uneasiness in London. The communication of Maret's note proposing a Congress had already provoked a despatch from Castlereagh to Aberdeen on September 28th¹, deprecating the conclusion of any armistice, or the entering into any prolonged discussion, with Napoleon, before the substance of the Allies' terms had been granted. "When Buonaparte proposes a Congress," he wrote, "let him state the principles on which he is ready to negotiate, and it will then be in the power of the Allies, comparing them with the acknowledged principles which bind them together, to judge whether discussion can be advisable on such a basis." And, while asserting that Great Britain would always be ready to enter into negotiations in conjunction with her Allies, he "deprecates illusory discussions which must damp the ardour of the Confederacy, and conceives that no steps ought to be taken to assemble a Congress, till some satisfactory basis is previously understood." And such a basis was, surely, to be found in the Russian proposals of May 16th, with Castlereagh's additions.

Aberdeen was, a little later, instructed in a private letter to urge Austria to put more faith in the sword and less in diplomacy. His rather hasty step as regards Murat was, indeed, immediately approved by Castlereagh, though he was cautioned against committing his Court to any formal guarantee of Naples to its ruler. It was, moreover, to be clearly understood that any engagement to Murat must be contingent on his active participation in the struggle against France; and it was assumed that Austria would find an indemnity for Ferdinand². In the private letter³ accompanying the despatch, Castlereagh showed that he scarcely hoped much from these negotiations, though he admitted that the military advantages to be obtained were worth the sacrifice.

"I lose no time," he wrote, "in relieving you from all anxiety upon the point of Murat. It is a strong measure, but warranted by the state of Italy,

¹ F.O. Austria, 101; *British Diplomacy*, p. 98.

² Castlereagh to Aberdeen, October 15th (no. 21) (Most Secret). F.O. Austria, 101.

³ Castlereagh to Aberdeen, October 15th (Private and Confidential). F.O. Austria, 101; *British Diplomacy*, p. 102.

of which important portion of Europe, in a military sense, I consider the *soi-disant* King of Naples to be completely Master, for with his army he can at once march uninterruptedly to the Tagliamento, and, unless the Viceroy evacuates the whole of what is called the Illyrian Provinces, his communications and his kingdom of Italy are in equal jeopardy. I own, however, I am not sanguine as to the result of the negotiation, because I assume Murat to be a mere calculator, and there is a spirit of negotiation about Metternich upon which such adventurers will always so far speculate as to endeavour to gain time."

Perhaps it was this distrust of the whole matter that prevented Castlereagh from informing Bentinck of the change in British policy—an omission which was to cause much confusion in the ensuing months.

Castlereagh was, indeed, far from satisfied with Metternich's general attitude and the spirit in which he was conducting the War. The reply to Maret was termed a "milk-and-water" answer to an insulting letter. Let Austria "imitate Prussia," wrote Castlereagh, "and make the Austrians an armed people," if she was desirous of obtaining peace from Napoleon.

"If you ever mention to Mr de Metternich my individual sentiments upon these subjects," he continued, "you can from your own knowledge assure him, that I am not one of those who cannot reconcile themselves to contemplate the possibility of peace even with Bonaparte, but I am satisfied it must be a peace founded upon a principle of authority and not of submission. That to obtain and still more to preserve it, we must rouse and arm the people we have to conduct, and it is in the earnest desire of peace that I wish to see him employed, rather in preparing the nation for sacrifices and exertions than in idly flattering them with the notion that peace is at hand."

And the rôle he designed for Austria in Italy is clearly indicated in the phrase "Until a solid organisation of the mass of the population is secured, we shall always find them timid as to acquisitions to the southwards and avaricious of extensions on their eastern frontier." In a postscript, written after perusal of Napoleon's appeals in the *Moniteur* after the breaking of the Armistice, he added one of those passionate if uncouth entreaties which moments of emergency sometimes drew from him.

I cannot, I own, but consider [them] as a serious and awful summons to us all for renewed vigilance concert and exertion. It convinces me that Bonaparte has determined to be numerically powerful on all points. This, I think, he has the means of doing for a limited period, and upon the confines of France. Having men under arms in abundance, he can make this gigantick array but he cannot sustain it. If confined even for a time to the

sphere within which he now moves, it must dissolve; but the whole military history of the Revolution has taught us to dread that the monster once engendered on French ground may break loose to seek its sustenance elsewhere. This is the true danger against which the Continent and especially Austria has to provide, and she ought not to lose an hour in appealing forcibly to the nation. The people are now the only barrier. They are against France, and this is the shield above all others that a State should determine to interpose for its protection which is so wholly destitute as Austria of a defensible frontier.

But while Castlereagh was penning these lines the Allies had triumphed. The insistence of the German Generals, and the impetus that Stewart and others had given to the lagging steps of Bernadotte, had at last united the three armies in overwhelming force against Napoleon at Leipzig, and the issue of the three days' fighting had barely left enough troops to win their way to the Rhine past Wrede's Bavarians at Hanau. All Germany, except a few northern fortresses, including Hamburg was now at the mercy of the Allied armies; and the petty States of the Confederation of the Rhine hastened to make their peace with Metternich. To the King of Saxony alone was it denied, and his country remained in military occupation of the Allies. The others, by a series of Treaties, bought their recognition by transferring their military resources to swell the armies of the Alliance.

Castlereagh's despatches of September 18th, instructing his Ambassadors to form the common Alliance, reached Cathcart on October 20th amid the ruins of Napoleon's army. The energetic Stewart and Jackson wished to press the negotiation at once; but Cathcart was put off by the Emperor, and, as headquarters split up while the Allied armies were marching to Frankfort, no opportunity was given to broach the matter until the 26th. Nor would Cathcart allow the other Ambassadors to approach their respective Sovereigns until Alexander's views were known¹. But, before the Tsar's views could be ascertained on this subject, another negotiation of considerable importance had taken place with the enemy—the offer known as the “Frankfort Proposals.” During the course of the battle of Leipzig, Napoleon, having taken the Austrian General Count Merfeldt prisoner, had seized the opportunity to attempt to use him as an intermediary between himself and the Allies. He had indicated to him, in vague

¹ Stewart to Castlereagh, October 21st, 1813. F.O. Prussia, 90; *British Diplomacy*, p. 80; Cathcart to Castlereagh, October 21st. F.O. Supplementary, 343. “I think there is nothing proposed which will occasion much difficulty or delay, and if it had arrived a day sooner it might perhaps have been signed here. It will be sent home as soon as possible.”

terms, it is true, and without committing himself in writing, that he was now prepared to make great concessions for the sake of peace. He was ready to abandon Germany and, in reply to the skilful insinuations of Merfeldt, offered some concessions as to Italy also. Only England, he said, who wished to reduce the French fleet to thirty ships, was the obstacle to negotiation. This overture was faithfully reported to Metternich, while the battle was still in progress; and after the great victory he determined to make an answer by a similar method, choosing for that purpose St Aignan, Napoleon's representative at Weimar, who had been taken prisoner by the Allies in the course of their advance. The idea was Metternich's own. The Prussians disapproved of it; Alexander acquiesced half-heartedly. It was in Aberdeen that Metternich was to find his most eager collaborator. On October 29th the English Ambassador had been informed, that "in consequence of the British answer having been received" (*i.e.* Castlereagh's despatch on Maret's note) "it has been determined to open a communication with Bonaparte, but in such a manner as to give rise to as little speculation as possible, and indeed the whole affair is to be kept a profound secret." All written communications were to be avoided. Aberdeen's colleagues were not informed of the transaction. The excuse was the extreme secrecy of the proceedings; but Metternich could not but know that Stewart at least was likely to adopt a very different tone to Aberdeen's.

The Austrian Minister was anxious at the situation which the overwhelming victory of Leipzig had created. He had long been doubtful of Russia's designs on Poland. Now, Prussia's claims were disturbing him. "Nothing," reported Aberdeen, "would induce Austria to agree to the incorporation of Saxony in Prussia¹." Metternich was, indeed, very doubtful whether Austrian interest would be served by a prolongation of the War. It might now be hoped that a peace could be obtained on the basis of the Treaties signed at Töplitz. The Allies were ready to offer Napoleon the "natural limits" of France—the Pyrenees, the Alps and the Rhine. If he refused them, an instrument would be in the hands of the Allies for undermining the national resistance of the French. If he accepted, on the Throne of France the Emperor's son-in-law might then help Austria to save Poland from Russia and Saxony from Prussia. But Austria was also bound to Great

¹ Aberdeen to Castlereagh, October 29th, October 30th, 1813. F.O. Austria, 102. Oncken, "Aus den letzten Monaten des Jahres 1813," *Historisches Taschenbuch*, VI. 2.

Britain, and, further, without some countenance from Great Britain the offer would be open to the same innuendoes that Napoleon had made to Merfeldt. Hence, the necessity of including among the negotiators Aberdeen, who, like Metternich but for different reasons, was anxious to bring about a peace.

The *mise-en-scène* was skilfully laid. Metternich saw St Aignan alone on the morning of November 8th, and prepared him for a further interview. Then, in conjunction with Nesselrode, whom the Tsar had with some diffidence allowed to act, and Aberdeen, he planned what should be said to him. In this interview, it was Aberdeen who combatted Nesselrode's desire to place the terms of peace as high as possible at the outset, and reduce them later in negotiation. The protest he made did credit to his honesty.

I told him that, if the propositions were made with the hope of being accepted, common-sense dictated that they should be as palatable to Bonaparte as was consistent with the fixed views of the Allies. If the propositions were made without any such hope, I deprecated the whole proceeding as being most erroneous in principle, and calculated to produce the greatest injury to the common cause. I observed that it would be much better to defer making any overture at all, if it was not thought that we were in a sufficiently commanding situation to make that which we were determined to press.

Metternich acquiesced. It was his own policy, and the "natural limits" were offered without restriction, though it was understood by Aberdeen that the frontiers of Holland and Piedmont should not be considered as irrevocably fixed. He urged the necessity of secrecy in the strongest possible manner, and made Metternich promise that St Aignan should not see the two Emperors, as had been originally intended. In deference, also, to his wishes, the proclamation to the French people which Metternich had intended to issue simultaneously with the opening of the negotiation was deferred till its result should be known. The preparations for war were to go on with undiminished activity¹.

Next morning, when St Aignan again saw Metternich and Nesselrode, Aberdeen joined them "as if by accident." But they had to deal with a diplomatist. St Aignan immediately, before Aberdeen's entry², reduced to writing the terms that were indicated. The terms

¹ Aberdeen to Castlereagh, November 9th, 1813. F.O. Austria, 102; *British Diplomacy*, p. 107.

² According to St Aignan's account; Aberdeen's despatch reads as if the writing had been done in his presence.

of the Continental Powers were sufficiently explicit—the frontiers of the Rhine, the Pyrenees and the Alps, and the absolute independence of all countries outside of them, except that in Holland the form of government and the frontiers were to be left open to discussion. But Aberdeen went on to report:

M. de St Aignan noted also that England was ready to make great sacrifices in order to obtain peace for Europe, that she did not interfere with the freedom of commerce or with those maritime rights to which France could with justice pretend. I particularly cautioned him against supposing that any possible consideration could induce Great Britain to abandon a particle of what she felt to belong to her maritime code, from which in no case could she ever recede, but that with this understanding she had no wish to interfere with the reasonable pretensions of France. I took this opportunity to contradict the assertion which Bonaparte had made to General Merfeldt, of the intention of the British Government to limit him to thirty ships of the line, and declared that so far as I knew it was a prejudice without any foundation.

All this was sincerely meant by Aberdeen as a way towards peace. But, in the Note which St Aignan subsequently drew up of the interview, the British Ambassador found himself committed to the proposition, "*que l'Angleterre était prête à faire les plus grands sacrifices pour la paix fondée sur ces bases, et à reconnaître la liberté du commerce et de la navigation, à laquelle la France a droit de prétendre.*" This Note he had not received when he drew up the despatch for his Court, which, however, shows his anxiety to excuse the step which he had taken¹. In this despatch, he emphasised again his object that "the transaction should be conducted with the utmost secrecy and expedition." In order to secure this secrecy, Cathcart was not taken into confidence until after Aberdeen's courier had gone, and Jackson, who was acting for Stewart, was not informed officially of the transaction until the 11th. Cathcart, who was rapidly sinking to a very subordinate position, acquiesced. Jackson had, however, learnt, so early as the 8th, what was going on; and he agreed with Hardenberg's view, which was openly expressed to him, that the offer was a mistake. He warned Stewart, in letters which were sent to London, that Austria and Russia were anxious for peace. Stewart shared his apprehensions, and Berna-

¹ "I trust your Lordship will not disapprove of the part which I have taken in this affair. My great object, if any propositions were made, was to frame them so as to afford the greatest probability of success, consistent with the fixed policy of the Allies. I hope the communication which has been made will be found to embrace the most essential points and to demand as much as our actual situation entitles us to expect." Aberdeen to Castlereagh, Nov. 9th, 1813. F.O. Austria, 103; *British Diplomacy*, p. 110.

dotte was irritated at having been kept in the dark. It was not, however, till Stewart returned to Frankfort that he learnt the contents of the note.

By that time, Napoleon's answer—the last penned by Maret, before Caulaincourt superseded him as Foreign Minister—had arrived. As Metternich predicted, it contained no acceptance of the basis, but merely declared a readiness to treat. St Aignan's minute was, however, skilfully used to insinuate that maritime questions would be discussed at the Congress. The unofficial and secret conversation had thus been made the basis of bringing into the European settlement the question of the Freedom of the Seas, which it was a cardinal point in British policy to refuse to discuss. Aberdeen had no alternative but to send in a minute of protest to Metternich, who returned an acceptable answer, which, now that Napoleon had rejected his terms, he had no difficulty in sending. His reply to Maret reiterated the necessity of accepting the terms before any discussion could take place. Aberdeen was satisfied with these proceedings. He explained to Castlereagh in a despatch of November 28th that the basis was merely meant to indicate the boundaries of France. Thus, no mention had been made of Poland, Sicily, Norway and other objects, some of which were of vital interest to Great Britain, and he assured him that "both the imperial Courts have framed their conduct on their belief of what would be most approved of by the British Government¹." Stewart, however, was now alarmed and indignant. It was only from Maret's answer that he learnt the contents of the note, and both he and Jackson were naturally angry at being kept in the dark. A despatch was sent to London which criticised in the warmest language Aberdeen's conduct². This did not make Stewart any more popular with the Courts of Austria and Prussia, and it was soon obvious that he and Aberdeen had no confidence in one another, and the latter at Metternich's request concealed from his fellow Envoy everything concerning the important negotiations. Cathcart in vain tried to make peace between them; but the quarrel broke out openly on the receipt of another reply from Napoleon, this time signed by Caulaincourt, whose nomination to the Foreign Ministry in place of Maret was a concession to the growing peace party at Paris. The arrival of this Note was concealed even from Aberdeen, until Pozzo di Borgo, who, as will be seen, was

¹ Aberdeen to Castlereagh, November 28th, 1813. F.O. Austria, 103; *British Diplomacy*, p. 113.

² Stewart to Castlereagh, November 28th, 1813. F.O. Prussia, 91; *British Diplomacy*, p. 88.

despatched on a special mission to England, could take with him a copy. But Stewart was not so easily put off. He succeeded in obtaining a copy of this note through a subordinate in Metternich's office, and his messenger was able to leave at the same time as the Russian General with a letter of protest against the way in which the British Envoys were being treated. Pozzo's mission he regarded as an insult to himself and his colleagues and hoped that Castlereagh would give it no countenance. Neither Cathcart nor, of course, Aberdeen supported him. The Note that caused so much distress was an acceptance of the Frankfort basis and of the suggestion that a Congress should meet at Mannheim as soon as possible. But it was now too late. Stein's arrival at Frankfort had made Alexander far less inclined than before to stay his armies at the frontier. The Declaration of the Allies, drafted by Metternich, had been issued, which, while promising the French people the natural frontiers, had announced an invasion, of France. Reply was made that the answer of Great Britain must be awaited before the negotiation could go forward, and meanwhile all preparations were made for the invasion.

Under such conditions it was not likely that Castlereagh's project of a Grand Alliance would make much progress. No answer was given to Cathcart, until the St Aignan negotiation had taken place. Then, to Cathcart's surprise, it came in the form of a despatch to Lieven which suggested that Castlereagh's project was now out of date. Alexander proposed that the new Treaty should be connected with the British Subsidy engagements for the ensuing year, and he further pressed that Great Britain should state in it the cessions of Colonial conquests which she was prepared to make in the interests of peace. When Cathcart protested, Alexander proposed, instead, merely a renewal of the Subsidy Treaty with an engagement as regards Spain; but, when urged to add the independence of Holland, with a "Barrier," Switzerland, and Sardinia, he showed great disinclination to anything of the kind, stating that "perhaps it was better to avoid binding more than was necessary by Treaty, lest in striving to do too much we should lose the opportunity of doing anything¹." Stewart won the full assent of the Prussian Court²; but further negotiations on the 17th only revealed the fact that neither Russia nor Austria had any intention of going so far as Castlereagh wished. Aberdeen had hopes that Metter-

¹ Cathcart to Castlereagh, December 5th, 1813. F.O. Russia, 87; *British Diplomacy*, p. 48.

² Stewart to Castlereagh, November 24th, 1813. F.O. Prussia, 91; *British Diplomacy*, p. 88.

nich would carry the matter through, and Cathcart left the negotiations mainly to him—a device all the more congenial to Austria and Russia, as it left Stewart out of the game. But, though Metternich was much more encouraging than Alexander, he, in a conference with Aberdeen and Nesselrode, backed the Russians in demanding that Great Britain should furnish a declaration as to her conquests. Aberdeen offered to make a general declaration in vague terms; but Metternich used the Tsar's wishes as an excuse for insisting.

"I see clearly," wrote Aberdeen, "that Prince Metternich, although perfectly ready to sign the Treaty himself, is unwilling to follow the example of Prussia in separating herself from the Allies, for fear of giving umbrage to Russia. He therefore will endeavour if possible to draw Russia with him. This may be all very right, but I could not help observing to them that they appeared by their conduct almost as anxious to make common cause against us as against France¹."

The result was that the negotiation failed. Nothing whatever was signed; and, instead, Pozzo di Borgo was sent to London with special Instructions for himself and Lieven to conclude a treaty with the British Government, in which both next year's Subsidies and the cession of the Colonial conquests were to be specified. In spite of Metternich's apparent goodwill, there can be no doubt that the insistence on this latter point was mainly due to him; for it reiterated the demand he had made at the beginning of the year. Without it, indeed, he could not have that complete mastery over the issue of peace or war, which it was his settled purpose to obtain before the Congress, now agreed upon, met. Meanwhile, during the month of December, the disunion of the British Ambassadors was reflected in the disputes that were appearing amongst the Allies on all sides. Bernadotte, now that Leipzig had rendered him far less indispensable to his Allies, was being treated with much less attention and respect than before, even on military questions. He was clearly loath to invade French soil, preferring to attack Denmark, and, though Stewart visited his headquarters in December to urge the importance of an attack on Holland, whither the British Ministry were now despatching an expeditionary force and the Prince of Orange, he remained sullenly occupied with his own projects of Swedish aggrandisement and the ambitious design on which he had long meditated of replacing Napoleon on the Throne of France.

¹ Aberdeen to Castlereagh, December 5th, December 9th, 1813. F.O. Austria, 103.

Far more serious was the rivalry that began to appear between Austria and Russia. The main reason, ostensibly, was a dispute between Alexander and the Austrian Generals as to the necessity of passing through Switzerland on the march to France. Under the influence of La Harpe and Jomini, Alexander refused to violate the neutrality of Switzerland, which Napoleon, who could not but win strategic advantage from it, had promised to respect. The dispute was only settled by Metternich's skill in arranging for a mild revolution in Switzerland, which ensured a welcome for the Allied armies; yet the incident did much to embitter his relations with Alexander. But there were far graver causes for the prevailing discontent among the Allied diplomatists. The Powers were now deeply pre-occupied with the future settlement of the territories which had come into their possession as a result of the break-up of the Napoleonic empire. Metternich had resumed negotiations with Murat who had left the remnants of the Grand Army and returned to his kingdom, vowing to avenge himself on the Emperor. Aberdeen, hereupon, tried to restrain Metternich from offering too much; but he had already committed himself, and Metternich had a free hand to offer him his kingdom in return for military assistance, if Austrian armies found themselves unable to deal with the French under Eugene, as was soon seen to be the case. By his Treaties with Bavaria and other members of the German Confederation, Metternich had already done much to undermine Stein's plan of a consolidated Germany. But he was even more closely concerned with the questions of Poland and Saxony. Austria was indeed looking for her own compensation in Italy; but she felt that a revived national Poland under Russian control would be a terrible menace to her Eastern frontier. Even the entire absorption of Saxony by Prussia would be preferable to this. The eyes of the Sovereigns and statesmen were accordingly directed towards the Vistula as much as to the Rhine, which their armies were preparing to cross. It was only natural, therefore, that they should wish to commit themselves as little as possible, and they were in no mood to fall in with Castlereagh's comprehensive schemes of Alliance.

Upon these difficult negotiations Castlereagh could exercise little influence from London. The advance of the Allied Armies had brought headquarters a week nearer to him; but contrary winds delayed the packets, and it sometimes took six or seven weeks for a message to go and return. Before the news of Leipzig reached him,

he continued to press the Allies to raise their demands as high as possible, and to make the exertions necessary to enforce them; above all he pointed out again and again the necessity of uniting their counsels in a common bond. He dwelt persistently on the magnitude of French preparations and the certainty that Bonaparte would accept no possible peace, unless resisted with perseverance as well as energy—facts which, also, furnished “unanswerable arguments in support of the system of unqualified union amongst the Powers contending against France.” He was dissatisfied with the limited extent of the Treaties of Töplitz, and especially with the fact that they made no mention of Spain; and he gave Cathcart a tolerably strong hint that the absence of any recognition of this essential point might affect the Subsidy arrangements for the next year¹. His formal approval of Aberdeen’s Subsidy Treaty with Austria at Töplitz was couched in a similar strain.

The question of Holland and the Low Countries now began to form one of the principal preoccupations of the British Government. The result of the battle of Leipzig had been to bring about an insurrection in Holland, and, on December 2nd, the Prince of Orange was received at Amsterdam and placed himself at the head of the national movement. This step had been concerted by the British Government, and troops were despatched under Sir Thomas Graham. But it was not merely Holland that it was now hoped to free from French control. So early as November 5th, Castlereagh informed Aberdeen that at this point the Rhine could not be a suitable frontier for France, and every argument was brought forward that might induce the Powers to see their own interests in the complete freedom of Holland and the necessity of a ‘Barrier’ (a term inherited from the struggle with Lewis XIV) between Holland proper and France. The British Cabinet had come to close agreement with William of Orange, and the project of establishing that Prince as ruler not only of Holland, but of a considerable portion at least of Belgium and possibly of northern Germany, was being actively pursued. Such a kingdom, in conjunction with a restored and consolidated Hanover, was regarded as the best means to keep French power in check on the north-eastern frontier².

¹ Castlereagh to Cathcart, October 14th, 1813. F.O. Supplementary, 343; *British Diplomacy*, p. 34. Castlereagh to Cathcart, October 15th. F.O. Russia, 87.

² Castlereagh to Aberdeen, November 5th, 1813. F.O. Austria, 101; *British Diplomacy*, p. 106. One argument for Holland’s independence is noticeable. “If in no other point of view than as the natural centre of the money transactions of Europe, all interested nations are interested in its being again raised to the rank of a free and independent state.” Castlereagh to Aberdeen, Nov. 5th, 1813. F.O. Austria, 101.

On November 30th, after the receipt of the news of the success of the insurrection, this point was again urged by him in words which have been often quoted. "The destruction of that arsenal is essential to our safety. To leave it in the hands of France is little short of imposing upon Great Britain the charge of a perpetual war establishment¹"; and he directed Aberdeen in the strongest possible terms to remedy the Frankfort proposals on this point. To Cathcart he wrote "I must beg of you never to lose sight of Antwerp and its noxious contents,—recommend also the Orange cause to the Emperor's warmest protection. The popular spirit which has shown itself there I look upon as amongst the most fortunate events of the war." Aberdeen sent agents and money to the Low Countries. But Metternich was not yet ready to agree that the Low Countries should be taken from France, and he had, moreover, not completely abandoned the idea of creating an independent kingdom there under the Arch-duke Charles, if the French were removed. Stewart did his utmost to bring Bernadotte's force into action upon Holland; but, in spite of letters from the King of Prussia and Alexander, the Prince-Royal was not anxious to use his Swedes at a point where his own interests would scarcely be much served, and preferred instead to move against Holstein, so that Denmark would be compelled by this threat to her German dominions to cede Norway to him.

Meanwhile, Castlereagh had to consider the greater questions which were raised by the news of the Frankfort proposals and the failure of his Ambassadors to obtain the Treaty of Alliance. The freeing of Germany, and especially the recovery of Holland, had acted like wine on the spirits of the Cabinet and the nation. "It has operated here as magical," wrote Castlereagh of this latter event; "there is nothing beyond the tone of this country at this moment²." But, though he was urgent to obtain the best possible peace, he remained true to his policy of not pressing Great Britain's Allies too far. He approved Aberdeen's action at Frankfort on receipt of his first despatches, and accepted the basis, merely trying to interpret the term "natural frontiers" so as to secure "protection" for Holland, whose cause he again warmly commended. But he indicated, once more, that Great Britain's attitude towards her Colonial conquests would depend on a satisfactory result on this point. He, also, urged that, if the basis

¹ Castlereagh to Aberdeen, November 30th, 1813. *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ix. 35. The date there given is 13th, but it seems clear that 30th is more correct.

² Castlereagh to Cathcart, November 30th, 1813. F.O. Russia, 83.

was not at once accepted, the negotiation should be forthwith terminated. When, however, the British Cabinet had received the text of St Aignan's memorandum, they were much alarmed at the form which the negotiation on "Maritime Rights" had now assumed. Peremptory orders were sent to Aberdeen to make a written protest against the assumption that Great Britain could allow any discussion of this question in the Peace Congress. The document was also subjected to further criticisms. Exception was taken to the word "natural" in the phrase "natural limits"; and it was asserted that, if the enemy rejected this basis, he could have no claim to receive the offer again at a later date. It was, also, held that the reference in St Aignan's minute to the "natural influence" of France over the secondary States of Germany was liable to misinterpretation, and might be used to prevent the German States from forming "a Federal connexion under a constitutional head" to the exclusion of foreign influence. Castlereagh did not, however, agree with Stewart's criticism that Norway should have been included in the basis, accepting Aberdeen's explanation that only the frontiers of France were relevant; and his brother received a snub for the line which he had taken¹.

But on the question of the Grand Alliance, Stewart found his views more readily accepted, and Castlereagh expressed himself in strong terms to Cathcart, when he received the first news of Alexander's objections. He peremptorily refused to buy the Alliance at the price of subsidies and Colonial conquests. "If this species of negotiation is persisted in, better at once decline the measure altogether," he wrote, "and I am yet to learn why Great Britain is more interested in cementing the Confederacy than Russia." He noted that the principal point of his proposal had obviously been missed in these attempts of the Allies to utilise it for their own ends. "The main question is," he insisted, "shall the Confederates by a common treaty now identify their cause, and lay the Foundation of a defensive alliance against France?" He still hoped, therefore, that the Alliance would be carried through.

When, therefore, he learnt from Lieven the counter-proposals of Alexander, emphasising and expanding these demands, he showed himself extremely indignant. He refused even to enter into an official discussion with Lieven of such terms, but took pains to impress

¹ Castlereagh to Aberdeen, December 7th, 1813. F.O. Austria, 101; *British Diplomacy*, p. 116. Castlereagh to Stewart, December 17th. F.O. Prussia, 86; *British Diplomacy*, p. 92.

on him, in an informal conversation, the feelings of his Government. He was indignant at Alexander's suggestion that the British proposal seemed to indicate a distrust towards the Allies. It was not because the particular interests of Great Britain stood most in need of the Alliance that it had been put forward. Great Britain, he intimated, could look after herself better than any Continental Power, and she had approached Russia first, as being all but equally invulnerable. The Confederacy, he pointed out, was designed to restrain France—the France of Napoleon or the Revolution—in the future as well as up to the termination of the War—"not only to procure but to preserve peace."

"The terms of peace," he said to Lieven, "are no doubt of essential moment, and the arrangement of limits indispensable to the common safety. Nothing, however, but a defensive League is likely to deter France from returning to the old system of progressive encroachment. The proposition for such a League, it was conceived, would come with most propriety from Great Britain and from Russia, as the Powers least exposed in the first instance to French encroachments. It appeared that the example of two such leading Powers, ready to lend themselves to a system of common protection, would give confidence to the more exposed States, and encourage them to lean on such alliance for security, rather than attempt to fall back within the circle of French influence. That, whatever might be the hazards of a system of this nature, upon every enlarged view of policy it became Great Britain and Russia, even with a view to their own separate interests, not to shrink from bearing their share in it¹."

He was prepared to make some modifications in his first proposals, to restrict the Treaty in the first instance to the Great Powers—Spain, however, being included—and to stipulate precisely the amount of force each should contribute to the Alliance. But he made the position quite clear as regards the Colonial conquests of Great Britain. She was ready to make, as she had already made, a general promise to restore conquests, if a satisfactory Continental peace was assured. But she was not ready to bind herself to details and simply hand over all the negotiations to her Allies. "The British Government never once conceived," he wrote, "that it could be expected that Great Britain would by treaty pass this discretion into other hands, and confide to its Allies the trust of negotiating for her at a general peace." He pointed out that the Allies had not said what they intended to do with their conquests, and Great Britain meant to preserve the same liberty of action. Finally, he added an appeal which showed how far he was removed from the insular position traditional to

¹ Castlereagh to Cathcart, December 18th, 1813. F.O. Papers, 23; *British Diplomacy*, p. 59.

British statesmen, and how deeply he had been impressed by the necessity of her maintaining her rôle of the protector of the Continent against France.

"Amongst the fluctuating policy of States," he wrote, "which too frequently varied with the predominance of particular statesmen, it appeared to me not less an act of wisdom than of duty to the world, that Great Britain and Russia should take this occasion of solemnly binding themselves in conjunction with the more exposed States of the Continent to oppose a Barrier hereafter to the oppression of France. The determination to take upon themselves this generous and provident task could afford to Europe the best, perhaps the only prospect of a durable peace; and when the experience of latter times was examined with respect to the policy of indifference to the fate of neighbouring States, the most anxious and interested politicians would find little to give countenance to an abstracted and selfish line of policy."

While Castlereagh held these views, it was not likely that Pozzo di Borgo could add much to Lieven's arguments; and Castlereagh refused to carry the negotiation further. It was, at first, his intention to request the Allies to send full powers to their Ambassadors at London for signing a Treaty of Alliance on the terms he had indicated. But the news from the Continent finally decided the Cabinet to take a more important step. The dissensions between the Allies were growing, and the British Ambassadors, so far from being able to prevent them, were themselves at issue and concealing their proceedings from one another. Jackson, who had been sent home for the purpose by Stewart after the Frankfort proposals, brought news, on the 15th, of Stewart's growing alarms and suspicions. Austria and Russia were now reported as on the verge of a rupture, and Bernadotte's conduct was arousing the gravest doubts. In spite of the favourable military situation, there appeared to be a real danger that a Treaty might be made without obtaining those securities which British statesmen thought necessary to the peace of the Continent. In these circumstances, it was decided that a member of the Cabinet should proceed to the Continent, furnished with specific and comprehensive Instructions, so that he could make decisions on the spot. Castlereagh at first thought of sending Harrowby, who had been Pitt's agent in the unfortunate negotiations of 1805. But it was clear to his colleagues that the Foreign Minister must go himself. If he remained in London, as had been proved, affairs changed so rapidly that he could obtain no control over events, and he was too far away to judge accurately between his rival Ambassadors.

"You have passed from operations so rapidly to negotiations," he wrote to Cathcart, "that my arrangements have not kept pace with you. Had I foreseen that you were likely to open an intercourse at Paris, I should have deemed some central authority indispensable and should have at least required the three Ministers at Head Quarters to deliberate and decide on matters of general interest collectively. As it is, I hope no real mischief has occurred and I rely upon finding you all drawing cordially together¹."

II. THE FALL OF NAPOLEON AND THE FIRST PEACE OF PARIS

The Instructions which Castlereagh took with him to the Continent were drawn up in the form of a Cabinet Memorandum². This important document was prepared by his own hand and approved at a full Cabinet meeting, from which Camden was the only Minister absent. Before submitting his views to his colleagues, Castlereagh had obtained from the Ambassadors of the three Allied Powers Memoranda on the wishes of their Governments, and this information had been supplemented by unofficial discussions with Lieven and Pozzo di Borgo. Jackson, on his return from Frankfort, must also have furnished him with a good deal of that kind of information which cannot be conveyed in writing. He was thus fairly well acquainted with even the less obvious aspects of the situation. The effect of the recent discussions at Frankfort can, therefore, be clearly discerned in the Cabinet Memorandum; but the document is singularly moderate in tone, and evades some of the most controversial points. It was intended to deal in detail with only those questions in which Great Britain was specially interested, and the general Continental settlement is only very briefly considered. Designed as it was to enable Castlereagh to make decisions on the spot and so avoid the delay and consequent lack of influence which frequent reference to his Cabinet would entail, a very great deal was left to his discretion, revealing the fact that his colleagues had already great confidence in his ability and judgment, though he had not yet completed his second year as Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Castlereagh had already received from the three Ambassadors satisfactory assurances on the question of Maritime Rights, which the Frankfort proposals had brought under discussion. There could be no question of compromise on this point, and one of his first tasks

¹ Castlereagh to Cathcart, December 22nd, 1813. F.O. Supplementary, 343; *British Diplomacy*, p. 62.

² Dated December 26th, 1813. F.O. Continent. Archives, 1; *British Diplomacy*, p. 123.

when he arrived at headquarters was to secure a further declaration from the principal Ministers to the same effect. But the question of the restoration of the Colonial conquests still remained an open one, and how much importance was attached by the Allies to an explicit declaration on the subject had been seen in the course of the recent negotiations concerning the Alliance. This question, therefore, occupied the principal place in his instructions. Once more it was laid down that British concessions were to depend upon the nature of the Continental Peace. So far as this fell short of what was considered necessary to the security of Holland, Italy and the Peninsula, a greater share of the conquests must be retained by Great Britain. Since it was now known that the Allies would be prepared to insist at least on the "natural limits" of the Alps, the Rhine and the Pyrenees, it was really the protection of Holland with which the Cabinet was mainly concerned; and to this point the Instructions recur more than once. Antwerp itself and "the absolute exclusion of France from any naval establishment on the Scheldt" were made conditions *sine qua non* of any material concessions by Great Britain. But it was hoped that more than this would be obtained, and that the whole of the Low Countries would be made into a "Barrier" against France. Only in that case would the majority of the Dutch and French Colonies be returned to Holland and France. It should be noticed that the actual union of the Low Countries and Holland was not yet finally decided. Metternich's hint that he might, after all, desire to set up an Austrian prince there was taken into account, and was to be accepted if pressed. It was also understood that part of Belgium might have to be left in French hands, if the Allies were not sufficiently successful, and the extension of the Prince of Orange's dominions into Germany was to depend on their consent. But the negotiations that Castlereagh had been carrying on with the Prince show that he had a clear policy, though he did not wish to bind himself too strictly in his Instructions; and, since the marriage of the Prince of Orange with the Princess Charlotte was expressly suggested, there could be no doubt as to the intention at this moment to make Holland as large as possible, though Castlereagh modified his views on this head after his first interviews with the Allied Ministers.

If Holland were restored in this way, the conquests, except for those which were to be considered as absolutely necessary to her maritime strategy, were to be regarded as objects of negotiation. But, since it was not possible to lay down express conditions as to how many

Colonies would be returned, the number was to depend on the kind of peace secured, and was therefore susceptible to many variations. In Castlereagh's¹ "Memorandum on a Maritime Peace" (an unsigned and unfinished document which accompanies the Instructions, and may be considered as part of them), the principle on which Britain was acting is clearly laid down:

Her object is to see a maritime as well as a military Balance of Power established among the Powers of Europe, and as the basis of this arrangement she desires to see the independence of Spain and Holland as maritime Powers effectually provided for. Upon the supposition that these two objects shall be obtained in the proposed arrangements, that the limits of France shall be reduced within proper bounds, and that the peace of the Continent shall be secured by an amicable understanding between the Allies, Great Britain will then be prepared also to return within corresponding limits and to throw her acquisitions into the scale of the general interests. As nothing is yet defined with precision either as to the state of the enemy's limits or as to that of the Allies, it is impossible to do more than state on the part of Great Britain the nature and extent of concession she would be prepared to make upon given data as to the continental arrangements. The object will best be effected by stating what the maximum of concession might be on the part of Great Britain upon assuming the reduction of France within her ancient limits, and the Allies having amicably arranged their own state of possession... (the British Government) do not desire to retain any of these Colonies for their mere commercial value—too happy if by their restoration they can give other states an additional motive to cultivate the arts of peace. The only objects to which they desire to adhere are those which effect essentially the engagement and security of their own dominion.

It was thus left to Castlereagh's discretion to restore all or none of the Colonies placed at his disposal, according as he was satisfied or not with the proposals of the Allies; and it will be seen that this power was of great importance to him at moments of crisis. The conquests which were to be retained on the plea of strategical necessity were few in number. Malta, of course, and the Cape of Good Hope, were included, Holland being compensated with £2,000,000 for the latter possession, which were to be spent in fortifying the Barrier. Mauritius, the Isle of Bourbon and Les Saintes were also considered necessary to the protection of the route to India. Guadeloupe was considered as in pledge to Sweden; but, if France insisted on its return, Bourbon could be assigned to Sweden (or some Dutch Colony for which Bourbon could be exchanged) in its place. All the

¹ F.O. Continent. Archives, I (undated); *British Diplomacy*, p. 126.

remaining West and East Indian Islands that had belonged to France or Holland Great Britain was prepared to surrender.

The Cabinet's views on the Continental settlement, apart from Holland, were only briefly indicated. Spain and Portugal were to be free, and, it was hoped, guaranteed against attack by the Continental Powers. In Italy, it was suggested that the King of Sardinia should receive Genoa in exchange for Savoy, as well as the control of the new routes over the Alps which the War had opened up. The Pope was to be restored; the centre of Italy left open for discussion. Lastly, if Austria made peace with Murat, the Sicilian Bourbons were to receive as a compensation Tuscany or Elba. All that was said as to Germany was that Great Britain was to offer her mediation. Any concession to Denmark was to be discussed with Sweden. Castlereagh had thus almost complete freedom of action in all the great questions that were dividing his Allies.

He was empowered to offer £5,000,000 in subsidies for the coming year to the Continental Powers, if they signed satisfactory engagements as to the Peninsula and Holland. Only a single short clause was inserted on the project of the Treaty of Alliance, which "was not to terminate with the War, but to comprise defensive arrangements with mutual obligations to support the Powers attacked by France with a certain amount of stipulated succours." The *casus foederis* was to be an attack by France on the European dominions of any of the Contracting Parties. Castlereagh had thus slightly modified his scheme in view of the criticisms of the Allies. The obligations to the Alliance were to be definite, instead of the vague phrase in the Instructions of September 18th, and the scope of the Alliance was to be restricted to Europe. Further, though Spain and Holland were to be contracting parties, it was now suggested, in view of the objections raised by Alexander and the dubious conduct of Bernadotte himself, that Sweden should not be an original signatory of the Treaty.

Doubtless, this short document was merely a *résumé* of a long discussion in the Cabinet, and Castlereagh had verbally gone into matters with his colleagues more fully than the Instructions record. The omissions cannot be accidental. Already, public opinion in England was discussing the policy of "no peace with Bonaparte" and the Bourbon Princes were making ready to act. There is nothing in the Instructions on this head. Castlereagh's own views, however, were clearly revealed in his discussions at headquarters. He was prepared to make peace with Napoleon, if a peace such as was implied in the

Instructions could be obtained. Like all the British Ministers, he wished the Bourbons to be restored if possible. But to avow such a policy was impossible for a Minister of the House of Hanover, and Castlereagh was convinced of the folly of attempting to impose the Bourbons on France by force of arms. To this policy he adhered, in spite of public clamour and opposition in the Cabinet, until the last chance of signing peace with Napoleon had vanished.

Even more significant is the absence in the Memorandum of any direction as to the disposition of the conquered territories of Poland and Germany. Castlereagh was well aware of the jealousies which had already arisen among the Allies on these points. That he considered an amicable termination of them of the highest importance is seen in the clause quoted above, which makes the Colonial concessions depend on "the Allies having amicably arranged their own state of possession." But he was apparently desirous of having a completely free hand on this point, so that he could make his decisions only after personal examination of the situation at headquarters. This was an important omission, for it is doubtful whether Castlereagh could have taken with him Instructions to pursue the line of policy which he followed during the next few months.

Castlereagh had no illusions as to the difficulty of the task before him, and he had already conceived the rôle he was to play in the great problem of the reconstruction of Europe. To F. J. Robinson (later Viscount Goderich and Earl of Ripon) whom he took with him as assistant, he stated in the course of the journey some of his ideas as to the situation he was about to meet, and the methods he meant to apply to it.

"In the course of our journey from Frankfort to Basle," wrote Ripon in a letter to Castlereagh's brother in 1839, "he stated to me that one of the great difficulties which he expected to encounter in the approaching negotiations would arise from the want of an habitual, confidential and free intercourse between the ministers of the great Powers *as a body*; and that many pretensions might be modified, asperities removed, and causes of irritation anticipated and met, by bringing the respective parties into unrestricted communications common to them all, and embracing in confidential and united discussions, all the great points in which they were severally interested¹."

He had thus already taken upon himself something more than the duties of a British Minister anxious to defend British interests. He

¹ The Earl of Ripon to the Marquess of Londonderry, July 6th, 1839. *Castlereagh Correspondence*, I, 128.

was prepared to play the part of Mediator between the statesmen and Sovereigns of the Allies whose decisions already threatened to break up the Alliance and to wreck the European settlement. It is this wide conception of his activities that marks out Castlereagh as the most European and the least insular of all British Foreign Ministers and, despite his limitations and his failures to appreciate the growing strength of the new forces of Liberalism and Nationality on the Continent, he had many of the qualities necessary for the task which he had set himself. Lord Ripon's comments, though designed to be read by an affectionate brother engaged in defending Castlereagh's reputation, have been justified by the researches of historians.

No man was ever better calculated so to transact business himself, and to bring others to act with him in such a manner, than Lord Londonderry. The suavity and dignity of his manners, his habitual patience and self-command, his considerate tolerance of difference of opinion in others, all fitted him for such a task: whilst his firmness, when he knew he was right, in no degree detracted from the influence of his conciliatory demeanour¹.

Thanks to these qualities, he was able to give to the Alliance a unity of view and a firmness of purpose which it sorely lacked, and ultimately to effect a European settlement which at least brought peace for a generation. In so doing he also laid the foundations for a new experiment in International Government, which, though it failed for the moment, was not the least of the stepping-stones in Europe's progress towards International Peace.

Castlereagh left England on the evening of the New Year, and arrived at Bâle on January 18th. He passed through the Hague and there opened to the Prince of Orange his views on the "Barrier," the Dutch Colonies and the marriage with the Princess Charlotte, and pressed him to expedite the siege of Antwerp, which Carnot was defending with all his old skill. At Bâle he found Metternich, Stadion and Hardenberg, but not Alexander, who had departed for the headquarters of the Allied armies at Langres. He was impatiently expected by all. Alexander had left a message with Cathcart, entreating Castlereagh to see him first before any of the statesmen, so much did he dread the impression that Metternich might produce in his absence. Metternich, as his intimate letters to Hudelist show, built many hopes on the effect Castlereagh's arrival would produce both on Napoleon and on his own colleagues. It was indeed time that some new factor

¹ The Earl of Ripon to the Marquess of Londonderry, July 6th, 1839. *Castlereagh Correspondence*, 1, 128.

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¹ The Earl of Ripon to the Marquess of Castlereagh *Correspondence*, 1, 128.

emotional character of the Tsar, with whom Castlereagh was soon to have some stormy interviews.

The Ministers joined the Tsar at Langres on January 25th, and by February 1st the Alliance had compassed its object, and the Instructions were drafted for the Conference at Châtillon. Agreement was only reached, however, after prolonged discussions. The Austrians, both soldiers and diplomatists, were anxious to obtain peace as quickly as possible. Alexander, on the other hand, was determined to march on Paris and to refuse to treat with Napoleon. He denied, indeed, that he favoured Bernadotte; but he would not listen to any idea of the Bourbons, and talked vaguely of allowing the French nation to choose a ruler for themselves after Paris had been taken. Castlereagh, hereupon, suggested that the Ministers of the Four Powers had better discuss all the questions in dispute, and thus a Council was formally set up, in which during three days the whole policy of the Alliance was reviewed. Castlereagh, from the first, took a leading part in the discussions, and was eventually able to harmonise the conflicting views of Metternich and the Tsar. The Austrians he persuaded that military operations must go on unchecked, while the negotiations proceeded; the Tsar, or at least his Ministers, that terms must be offered to Napoleon and peace made with him, if he accepted them. As to the terms themselves, he succeeded in persuading Metternich to abandon formally the Frankfort basis, which, as he claimed, the military successes of the Allies and the Peace recently concluded with Murat had now rendered obsolete, and to substitute for them a project which practically reduced France to her ancient limits, with some concessions in Savoy and possibly on the left bank of the Rhine. All the Powers further agreed to his demand that Caulaincourt should be informed at the outset that the "Maritime Rights" must be left entirely out of the discussion. Less satisfactory were the consultations as to the outlines of the new Europe to be communicated to Caulaincourt. Here, only the vaguest formulæ could be drawn up, and no mention was made of Saxony or Poland. On these points, Castlereagh found the Powers full of suspicion and the hopes he had formed at Bâle quite illusory. Nevertheless, he insisted that France must be given some information on this head, and that, Great Britain having declared her readiness to conclude peace with Napoleon, the offer must be made in such a shape as to render its acceptance possible¹.

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, January 29th, 1814. F.O. Continent. 2; *British Diplomacy*, p. 141. See Oncken, "Lord Castlereagh und die Ministerconferenz zu Langres," *Historisches Taschenbuch*, vi. 4. p. 5.

These conclusions were drawn up in the form of a Protocol, and embodied in Instructions to the Allied Plenipotentiaries at Châtillon. Here, Russia, Austria and Prussia were represented merely by one subordinate each, the principal Ministers remaining at Schwarzenberg's headquarters with their Sovereigns. Castlereagh sent, not only Aberdeen, but also Cathcart and Stewart, apparently in order not to offend any one of them or the Powers to which they were severally accredited; but he also appeared in person, to keep watch over the proceedings. That he should leave headquarters at this period, showed how much importance he attached to the way in which the negotiations were conducted. It was not that he expected Napoleon to accept the terms offered; but he felt that the cause of the Allies, and even more the restoration of the Bourbons, depended on the impression which the transaction was to make on the public opinion of France and Europe; and, with some reason, he distrusted the capacity of the diplomatists sent to Châtillon to carry out their Instructions in the spirit in which he at least had drawn them up.

Events were soon to show how well founded these doubts were. At Châtillon, Caulaincourt revealed himself as a sincere patriot and eager to obtain peace, for he had no illusions as to the situation. But, when confronted with the offer of the "ancient limits," he quite naturally pressed for information as to the intentions of the Powers with regard to such territories as Saxony and Italy. This was precisely the information which the Allied Plenipotentiaries could not give him; for they had not settled the matter among themselves. Moreover, it was soon apparent that Razumoffski, the Russian Plenipotentiary, was anxious to stop the discussions altogether. He had indeed, almost immediately, received orders from Alexander to do so, for the successes of the Allies in the early days of February had convinced the Tsar that the War was practically over, and that he could march straight to Paris. Castlereagh appears to have shared this view to some extent, but he was anxious that there should be no sudden rupture on the part of the Allies, and he wished to use Caulaincourt's interrogatories as a means to settle the points of the Continental settlement on which the Allies were at variance. He told the Plenipotentiaries frankly at the outset that he would only be prepared to sign away the Conquests, after three preliminary conditions had been satisfied.

"The first was," he said, "that France should submit to retire, if not literally, substantially within her ancient limits. Secondly—that Great Britain should have an assurance by an amicable arrangement of limits

between the three Great Powers, that, having reduced France by their union they were not likely to re-establish her authority by differences amongst themselves. And thirdly—that we should be satisfied that the arrangements in favour of the Powers of whose interests we were especially the guardian, were likely to be attended to, and especially those of Holland and Sicily—the point of Spain being abandoned by France herself¹.”

But at Troyes, now the Allied headquarters, reached after Napoleon's defeat at La Rothière (February 21st) by Blücher, Metternich found that he could no longer control Alexander. The Tsar was urgent that Schwarzenberg should support Blücher's army and a direct march be made on Paris. The Austrians, both soldiers and diplomatists, were much alarmed, and Metternich especially so, since he feared, with reason, that Alexander had returned to the views he had held at Langres. The Tsar, at last, sent a formal order to Razumoffski to suspend negotiations². Castlereagh, therefore, left for Troyes on February 10th. There, he found that the Tsar's order had been issued on his own authority, so as to prevent any further discussions till the Allies should have reached Paris, where he intended to summon a Representative Assembly to decide the future Sovereignty of France, Napoleon himself not being excluded from candidature. The Austrians were indignant and alarmed, especially as it was rumoured that Bernadotte was about to place himself at the head of the Allied corps nearest Paris. It was Castlereagh's task to convince Alexander of the danger of these intentions; and this he accomplished in two stormy interviews. The Tsar was still hostile to the return of the Bourbons, particularly of Lewis XVIII himself, and talked of satisfying his Allies by setting up the Duke of Orleans or another member of the younger branches of the Family. Castlereagh, in his efforts to convince the Tsar, went to the extreme limit of free speech permitted from a statesman to a Sovereign. It was the first of many such interviews in the ensuing twelve months. He asked the Tsar how long he would keep his troops in France to support a new Sovereign on the Throne, after the Allies had refused to make a peace on their own terms with Bonaparte. Alexander remained obdurate. He attempted to refute Castlereagh by producing a despatch from Lieven of January 26th, which declared that the Prince Regent and Liverpool wished Napoleon to be dethroned and the Bourbons substituted. Castlereagh replied that he was bound by his Instructions, and denied the

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, February 6th, 1814. F.O. Continent. 2; *British Diplomacy*, p. 147.

² Fournier, *Congress von Chatillon*, pp. 313, 372.

Tsar's right to question them¹. He was very indignant at this attempt to undermine his authority, and the incident was perhaps a turning-point in his relations with the Tsar. For several days, the issue hung in the balance. But, in the Council of Ministers, where each Power replied in turn to a series of queries drawn up by Metternich, both Hardenberg and Castlereagh supported, in the main, the Austrian point of view, and Nesselrode was at heart of their opinion. A compromise was at last effected, in which Metternich obtained most of what he wanted, though not before he had secretly threatened to make a separate peace with Napoleon. He had to submit to a refusal of the armistice which Caulaincourt had offered, for on this point Castlereagh was strongly against him; but Alexander had to consent that the negotiations at Châtillon should be renewed, and circumstances soon made it clear that the march to Paris was out of the question. The Tsar's design had, however, caused a Convention to be drawn up by the three Continental Powers, as to the mode of occupation of the city. Castlereagh refused to sign this document, though he approved its contents, since he thought it advisable not to associate himself unnecessarily "in delicate questions relating to the interior of France²."

A new and more detailed document was, also, drawn up to be submitted to Caulaincourt. To effect this, Castlereagh had to make concessions. He now, for the first time, named the Colonies which he was prepared to give back to France, subsequently explaining to his Cabinet that, "as this is a document upon which, if the negotiation breaks off, the appeal [*i.e.* to public opinion] will be made, I thought it expedient to put the British terms forward in a liberal shape." The only French Colonies reserved, therefore, were Les Saintes, Tobago, Mauritius and Bourbon, and the French were to be allowed to have commercial settlements on the coast of India. In return, the limits of France were now expressly laid down as those of 1792, and, further, Castlereagh was allowed to add a clause stipulating that the Slave-trade should be abolished in all the Colonies so restored. But he had entirely failed to obtain his second point—an amicable arrangement among the Allies themselves, which he stipulated as necessary before he signed away the Colonies. On the contrary, Austria and Russia were more openly at variance than ever, and, in these circumstances, Castlereagh

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, February 16th, 1814. F.O. Continent. 2; *British Diplomacy*, p. 147.

² *Ibid.*

could do little either to bring his Allies to an agreement or to complete his project of a permanent Alliance.

But it was the question of the dynasty that had caused the greatest alarm, and Castlereagh took immediate steps to deal with it. He sent Robinson home to prevent any repetition of Lieven's intrigues, and naturally obtained Liverpool's full support. In spite of the opposition of one or two members of the Cabinet, a definite Instruction was sent to Castlereagh, that peace might be concluded with Napoleon if he accepted the Allied terms. At the same time, the Cabinet could not be deaf to the growing insistence of public opinion in England on the dethronement of Bonaparte. *The Times* and other papers were now vehement against him, and it was obvious that a peace with him, however satisfactory the terms, would be very unpopular. The Cabinet, therefore, urged that, if the terms were not at once accepted, an appeal should be made to the French nation to get rid of their ruler, and that, without attempting to prescribe to them their new sovereign, it should be suggested to them that only the Bourbons could bring them peace¹.

Castlereagh returned to Châtillon on February 16th, and the new *projet* was handed to Caulaincourt on the 17th. But, while these discussions had been in progress, the military situation had entirely changed; and, indeed, this had been one of the factors which had at last produced agreement. Napoleon had thoroughly beaten Blücher's troops in a series of battles in February, and then, turning on Schwarzenberg's army, had forced it to retreat in disorder. Thus it was now Caulaincourt and not the Allies who delayed; for Napoleon had withdrawn the permission to accept the terms previously given to his Envoy, who could now do nothing but refer to his master for new Instructions. Meanwhile, at the Allied headquarters, something like panic reigned, and the decision was taken to ask for an armistice. When this news reached Châtillon in a letter from Metternich, urging the necessity of expediting peace, Castlereagh immediately replied in an indignant letter, and entreated the Allies in passionate words not "to descend from the substance of your peace²." The letter betrays the emotion he felt; and, full of anxiety, he returned to headquarters, which had now retired to Bar-sur-Aube, so soon as the negotiations at Châtillon had been suspended. There, he found the greatest des-

¹ Bathurst to Castlereagh, February 27th, 1814. F.O. Continent. Archives, 2; *British Diplomacy*, p. 161.

² Castlereagh to Metternich, February 18th, 1814. F.O. Continent. Archives, 2; *British Diplomacy*, p. 158.

pondency. It was Alexander who had given the orders as to the armistice offer, and he was now almost as urgent for peace as Austria. The soldiers and diplomatists of both Powers were full of bitter recriminations. Each suspected the other of saving its army, while the threatened appearance of Czartoryski and Radziwill at Alexander's side renewed all Metternich's apprehensions about Poland. Castlereagh's patience was almost worn out. The Allies, by their previous hesitation, had let slip the opportunity of signing a peace on the basis of the old limits, and now they appeared to be ready to grant any concessions. "Nothing keeps either Power firm," he wrote, "but the consciousness that without Great Britain the peace cannot be made¹." His own position, however, he made quite clear. He would refuse to conclude any peace except that which had been agreed on at Türoyes, and, since it was unlikely that Napoleon would sign without assurances from Great Britain as to the Colonies, without Castlereagh peace could not be made. By this means, with some assistance from the Prussians, he succeeded in reestablishing confidence. At the same time, he played an important part in the military councils of the Allies, where some timid spirits were already pressing for a retreat to the Rhine. It was urgent to reinforce Blücher's beaten army, against which Napoleon had once more turned after retreating back to Schwarzenberg. The only means of obtaining these troops was to detach from Bernadotte's command the corps of Bülow and Wintzingerode, which were now advancing from the Belgian frontier. When the Allies hesitated lest such a step should offend Bernadotte, Castlereagh insisted that the order should be sent, and took upon himself the responsibility of soothing the Crown-prince. These troops reached Blücher just in time to save him at the battle of Laon, and Napoleon's failure in that battle marked the beginning of the end².

For the moment, the situation was saved. Instructions were sent to Châtillon to demand a definite answer within a reasonable time from Caulaincourt to the *projet* previously given him, and, urged by Castlereagh, Metternich sent a sufficiently warlike reply from the Emperor of Austria to a letter recently addressed to his father-in-law by Napoleon. Castlereagh did not return to Châtillon. The negotiations there now depended more on the firmness of headquarters and their

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, February 26th, 1814. F.O. Continent. 3; *British Diplomacy*, p. 160.

² Cf. the Earl of Ripon's account, *Castlereagh Correspondence*, I. 129. Bernadotte was conciliated by being given nominal command of all the troops besieging the French fortresses.

military and political energy than on what was said to Caulaincourt, and, above all, Castlereagh was anxious to use the financial necessities of his Allies to construct the Treaty of Alliance which recent events showed to be so urgently needed. He had kept this project in view, ever since he had joined the Allied Ministers. But the successive crises prevented him from doing more than discuss the question informally with his colleagues, as opportunity offered. So early as the middle of February, he had prepared a project of a Treaty based on his Instructions, and had secured the general approval of the Ministers of the three Powers. Even Alexander now gave his consent to the Treaty, stating that the restriction of the *casus foederis* to the European dominions of the Powers had removed his principal objection. The real motive of the Allies was, however, their anxiety to obtain Subsidies for the campaign; for Castlereagh refused to sign any Treaty on this subject, unless the larger question of the Alliance was likewise included. He had thus been forced to abandon the position which he had taken up in December, when approached by Lieven. This was, however, only a minor matter. Far more serious was it, that he had, also, to abandon his plan of making the Treaty contribute to the settlement of the outstanding questions between the Allies. His first weapon, the Colonial conquests, he was obliged to abandon, in order to obtain a suitable offer to Caulaincourt. Now, he had to promise the Subsidies without achieving his purpose. The truth was gradually becoming manifest, that the Allies were so divided as to render any result hopeless until after a long series of discussions. Castlereagh had, therefore, to be content with merely including in the Treaty the Articles already delivered to Caulaincourt at Châtillon, which, although they provided specifically for Holland, contained only vague references to the future of Germany, and made no mention of Poland or Saxony.

The Treaty of Alliance had a double object. First, to provide the means for ending the War then in progress. For this purpose, each Power agreed to keep 150,000 men in the field. The share of Great Britain was, however, a double one. For she not only bound herself to subsidise the armies of the other three Powers with five millions per annum, but she, also, agreed to provide 150,000 men herself. She was allowed, indeed, to employ the troops of the smaller Powers in the army for which she was responsible, and, as Castlereagh pointed out, the three other Powers had to raise considerably more than 150,000 men, for the Subsidies were based on the active strength of

the troops. Still, even Castlereagh felt it was a bold offer on the part of Great Britain, which had scarcely been considered a great military Power. But since the Allies pressed him, he felt that Wellington's successes had justified him in accepting the challenge, and he was convinced that, if his country wished to have real influence on the Continent, she must be ready to assume military as well as naval responsibilities. "There can be no reason," he wrote, "why Great Britain should not assume that station in Europe as one of the great military powers which the exploits of her armies and the scale of her resources have so justly entitled her to claim¹"; and, in a private letter, "My modesty would have prevented me from offering it; but, as they choose to make us a military power, I was determined not to play second fiddle²."

This agreement, which contained the usual clauses not to make peace except in common, was, however, only a continuation of the usual Subsidy engagements. The novel part of the Treaty, which was entirely due to Castlereagh, was to provide for the continuance of the Alliance in peacetime. In order that the Peace, when won, might be guaranteed, the Four Powers bound themselves to protect one another against France for a period of twenty years—but, in this case, the stipulated force was to be only 60,000 men. This is the origin of the Quadruple Alliance, which after some vicissitudes was to be revived again at Vienna and at Paris. It was Castlereagh's great scheme for preserving Europe from a repetition of the evils of the last twenty years. There can be no doubt that, if he had been able, he would have phrased it differently, and made it an Alliance, not merely against France, but against whatever Power broke the Peace. But, after all, it was France which, in the eyes of British statesmen, was most likely to cause a war in the future, and the equilibrium which the Treaty was to ensure was mainly to be obtained by balancing the rest of Europe against France. At least, so Castlereagh thought at the moment. He reserved the wider guarantee foreshadowed in Pitt's despatch of 1805, until the Allies should have settled their disputes. For it was not possible to broaden the scope of the Treaty, so long as it was uncertain what shape the New Europe would assume.

The Treaty was signed only by the Four Great Powers. Even Sweden was only asked to accede, and it marks the beginning of that

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, March 10th, 1814. F.O. Continent. Archives, 3; *British Diplomacy*, p. 165.

² Castlereagh to Hamilton, March 10th, 1814. *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ix. 335.

formal ascendancy of the Great Powers which was to be the characteristic of the nineteenth century. Spain, Portugal and Holland were also to be invited to place themselves under the protection of the Treaty, the minor German Powers not being included, because it was possible that they would shortly be welded together in a Federation which would be able to act for them all.

Castlereagh had thus accomplished only a part of the task which he had set himself, when he took his departure for the Continent. The Powers had shown themselves so undecided in their attitude towards the enemy, and so jealous of each other's claims, that no other course was possible. The European settlement had perforce to be left in a condition of uncertainty. But security against France, at least, had been won, and, with Napoleon still in the field, this had to override all other considerations. Even as it is, the Treaty, which was accepted by the Cabinet without alteration, and greeted with a chorus of praise by Castlereagh's subordinates, who knew how difficult the task had been, remains as, perhaps, his greatest achievement. At any rate, it symbolised the fact that, but for his intervention in 1814, the Coalition against France would almost certainly have been forced by its own dissensions to make a peace which, sooner or later, would have left Europe again at the mercy of Napoleon.

The Treaty of Chaumont, though dated March 1st, was not signed till March 9th, by which date the time limit for Caulaincourt's reply to the ultimatum of February 28th, had expired. During that period, Napoleon almost crushed Blücher's armies, but was foiled at Laon (March 9th) in a repulse which was equivalent to a heavy defeat; for Blücher, now reinforced by Bülow's and Wintzingerode's corps, was quite able to resume the offensive. But, in the meantime, Napoleon had entertained high hopes, and, up to March 9th, had sent no answer to Caulaincourt. The interval at Châtillon was passed in disputes as to the phrasing of the Protocol; but the information that reached the Plenipotentiaries made Caulaincourt even more anxious for peace—if this had been possible. Schwarzenberg's army won some minor successes, and from the south came the news (by way of London), that Wellington had resumed the offensive, defeated Soult at Orthez (February 27th) and was marching on Toulouse. On March 10th Caulaincourt sent an answer on his own initiative which evaded the direct question. Still, the Allied Plenipotentiaries did not break off negotiations, but referred the answer to headquarters; so that, as Stadion pointed out to Metternich, it was still possible to

ferred a peace with his Emperor's son-in-law. But, once the Châtillon Conference was broken up, events moved quickly. Metternich had now to guard against what action Alexander might take if he found himself at Paris with a free hand. The Bourbon cause had there been slowly winning adherents, and Talleyrand, with Dalberg and others, were preparing the ground. No communication, however, as Castlereagh reported with surprise to the Cabinet, had been entered into with the Allies until the middle of March. Yet Baron Vitrolles, who then appeared at headquarters, was not received by the Allied Ministers, until the rupture with Napoleon was announced. Then, under Metternich's presidency, a formal meeting was held, and it was determined to support the Bourbon cause. The Bourbons were promised by the Continental Powers the immediate administration of any districts that declared in their favour. Castlereagh, for his part, offered funds, which, however, he wished to furnish through his Allies, "as not only the most prudent in a financial point of view, as rendering the expense definite on our part, but as relieving the question of much of the political difficulty, which must always attend, in a Government like ours, the voting a sum of money for effectuating a change in the Government of France." In fact, Castlereagh, while now determined to bring the Bourbons back, was anxious to take no step which would enable the Opposition to accuse the Government of not allowing the French to choose their own Sovereign. In the same way, he hoped that events at Paris, towards which the Allied armies were now making progress, would be regulated by the Convention drawn up at Troyes, to which he had refused his signature, so as to effect "the object I have in view, which is, to bring Great Britain forward, in whatever may regard the interior of France, rather as the Ally and auxiliary of the continental powers than as charging herself in chief¹."

Alexander's consent was assumed, but not obtained, to these negotiations; for the Tsar was marching with the King of Prussia on Paris. Napoleon, on discovering their intentions, hesitated, and, before he could strike a blow, Marmont and Mortier had been defeated, and Paris capitulated. Castlereagh and Metternich, meanwhile, remained at Dijon with the Emperor of Austria, who, like Castlereagh, was anxious to avoid the final scene. There, on March 25th, the cause of the Bourbons was publicly toasted, Castlereagh joining in with the

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, March 22nd, 1814. F.O. Continent. 3; *British Diplomacy*, p. 168.

rest, and an Austrian agent was despatched to Monsieur, to urge him to raise the country, when the Allies would support him. Metternich's messenger to Paris was captured; but Castlereagh established communication by a letter to a friend in that city which brought a new agent to Dijon. When, therefore, on April 4th, Castlereagh and Metternich learnt that the Allies were in Paris, they knew that Talleyrand was assured of their support and that the Bourbon cause was in safe hands. Thus, though they were somewhat perturbed at the Tsar's pledge to guarantee a Constitution¹, yet they were quite easy in their minds on the question of the dynasty, in spite of the fact that Alexander's declaration merely excluded Napoleon himself from the Throne. Bernadotte's intrigues with Joseph and others, which were known through intercepted letters, had quite put him out of court, and Nesselrode had secretly reassured his colleagues on this head. Alexander at Paris had thus no real alternative to the Bourbons. He was easily persuaded, therefore, by the ingenious Talleyrand to take the necessary steps for their recall in a manner which ensured some show of popular approval, and the entreaties of the Marshals and Caulaincourt for a Regency were of no avail. That the Tsar had found it necessary to support Lewis XVIII, whom he regarded as absolutely unfit for the Throne, was due to causes over which no statesman had any control. But the steps that Castlereagh and Metternich took in the last days of March certainly contributed much to the course of events, and, but for the British statesman's intervention, the differences between Austria and Russia might have led to serious results. Alexander, however, was able by his solitary action to secure a Constitution for the French people—a step of sound wisdom, on which he would certainly have found it difficult to insist, if Castlereagh and Metternich had been on the spot. For, as will appear, with all his desire for a peaceful and contented Europe, Castlereagh had no wish to help the cause of Constitutional liberty on the Continent. Nor was he, when he arrived on April 10th, satisfied with the Treaty of Fontainebleau, which Alexander was on the point of signing with the dethroned Emperor. To this Treaty, which guaranteed the Emperor the full sovereignty of Elba, recognised his titles, assigned the duchies of Parma, Piacenza, and Guastalla to the Empress, with succession to her son, and made ample financial provision for Napoleon and all his family, Castlereagh raised many objections; but he was persuaded by Talleyrand that the situation made its acceptance inevitable. He

¹ "Without knowing what it is," reported Castlereagh.

refused, however, to sign it, and only acceded to it so far as the territorial arrangements were concerned. Thus, Great Britain persisted to the end in refusing to recognise the Imperial title, and Napoleon remained, for her, "General Bonaparte" to the end of the chapter.

Like some others, Castlereagh was not happy at the choice of Elba; but no other less objectionable alternative could be found. "I did not feel," he wrote to his Cabinet, "that I could encourage the alternative which Caulaincourt assured me Bonaparte repeatedly mentioned, namely, an asylum in England¹."

The Treaty of Peace had now to be made with a Bourbon Government, and it was nearly two months before it was concluded. The necessity of consolidating the power of the new monarchy and arranging for the withdrawal of the Allied armies and the surrender of the French fortresses, occupied most of the month of April. The Treaty was, moreover, delayed by the attempt of Talleyrand to obtain for the Bourbons an extension of the frontiers of 1792, while the disposition of the conquered territories had still to be determined. These discussions kept Castlereagh in Paris till the end of May, in spite of the desire of his Government that he should return to their assistance. He was occupied there, not merely with the Peace with France, but also with attempting to compose the differences between the Allies; while the War had left problems of importance all over Europe, in some of which, notably in those concerning Norway, Sicily, Spain and Holland, British interests were especially concerned. One of Castlereagh's first actions on arriving at Paris was to offer the post of Ambassador to Wellington, who accepted it with the same cheerful readiness to undertake any duty which he displayed throughout all these years. But Wellington could not come to Paris at this time; and, meanwhile, Castlereagh, with no one of high calibre to assist him, was unable to expedite matters, though he claimed to work as hard as it was possible for a man to do in a city like Paris.

In the Peace with France, Castlereagh was prepared to make concessions to the new monarchy, provided that they did not interfere with his plans for the Netherlands. He urged his Cabinet to be as liberal on Colonial questions as possible. France, he pointed out, was weak, and any Colonies returned to her could be easily reduced if a new war broke out. He was prepared, therefore, to limit his

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, April 13th, 1814. F.O. Continent. Archives, 4; *British Diplomacy*, p. 176.

demands to Mauritius and Tobago, retaining also, of course, Malta and the Cape, and confining the French in India to commercial occupation. He thus abandoned Les Saintes, but after pressure from the Admiralty added St Lucia in its place. He was even more anxious not to annex Dutch Colonies. "I am sure our reputation on the Continent," he wrote to Liverpool, "as a feature of strength, power and confidence, is of more real moment to us than an acquisition thus made¹." Castlereagh was, therefore; all the more indignant when he found that in his Counter-project delivered in the middle of May (which was shown to him unofficially before presentation), Talleyrand had refused to cede St Lucia and Tobago, demanded compensation for Mauritius and, worst of all, said nothing about the Slave-trade. His protests recalled Talleyrand to a sense of reality. But the most difficult question was the Slave-trade. Both Castlereagh and his Cabinet knew that it was necessary to satisfy public opinion in England on this point. The Abolitionists were well organised, and had captured the imagination of the nation. From this time onwards, not merely the British Ministers, but the Allied Sovereigns, were importuned by letters, memoranda and appeals of all kinds, in order to carry through universal abolition. The French, perhaps naturally, suspected this zeal on the part of a nation that had only recently been converted to the Abolitionists' views. They hinted that the British statesmen were utilising public opinion to prevent the French Colonies from rivalling the British in prosperity. In this they erred, for there is not the slightest doubt that both the nation and Ministers were perfectly sincere on this question—a fact of which the sacrifices which they were prepared to make during the succeeding years are sufficient evidence. But Castlereagh recognised the difficulties of the case. "My feeling is," he wrote, "that on grounds of general policy we ought not to attempt to tie France too tight on this question. If we do, it will make the Abolition odious in France, and we shall be considered as influenced by a secret view to prevent the revival of her colonial interests." He pressed, therefore, the advantage of conciliating French public opinion, rather than imposing by force concessions which France would do her best to defeat in practice².

Talleyrand, also, tried to obtain substantial concessions on the Netherlands frontier. This, again, Castlereagh peremptorily refused

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, April 19th, 1814. *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ix. 474.

² Castlereagh to Liverpool, May 19th, 1814. F.O. Continent. 4; *British Diplomacy*, p. 183.

to allow, telling Talleyrand that, if he wished for a lasting peace, he must extinguish "in the minds of the army, this false notion of Flanders being necessary to France." It was only a threat to transfer the negotiations to London that produced a settlement by May 30th, thus saving a month's Subsidies to the Exchequer.

In its final form, the Treaty gave Castlereagh almost everything that was essential to British interests. Her maritime position in the Mediterranean was secured by Malta and the protection of the long route to India by the Cape, Mauritius, St Lucia and Tobago. Holland was compensated for the cession of the Cape with two millions of money, which, however, she was to expend on constructing a "Barrier" against France. Holland's extension in the Netherlands was, also, especially mentioned in one of the Secret Articles of the Treaty; for Castlereagh felt it of the first importance not to leave this point open until the Congress. The mouth of the Scheldt was thus placed in the hands of a Power which it was hoped would be sufficiently strong to protect Antwerp, and, moreover, would be closely united to Great Britain by the marriage between the Prince of Orange and Princess Charlotte, to which all the Powers had agreed. France had been reduced to the frontiers of 1792, with some small concessions at Landau and Saarlouis, and in Savoy. No indemnities had, however, been imposed; for Castlereagh, like the Russian and Austrian statesmen, had declined to agree to Prussian demands on this point. This liberal concession, as well as the refusal to insist on the return of the art treasures accumulated at Paris, which had been either extorted by Treaty or frankly carried off as plunder, was due to the desire on the part of the Allies to be as lenient to the new Bourbon dynasty as possible. When the brutal exactions of France during the Napoleonic Wars are remembered, this decision deserves to rank as one of the most notable examples of political moderation in modern history. Alexander and Castlereagh were the main instruments in bringing it about, but the final word lay with the British, who saw France left without a National Debt, while their own had mounted to over seven hundred millions in the effort to overthrow her domination of Europe. It must be remembered also that the Subsidies had been given, not lent, and, save for a small loan to Austria which dated from 1796 and one or two other small sums, Great Britain had nothing to recover from her Allies in mitigation of her huge debt, which was causing her the most serious anxiety.

From Castlereagh's point of view, the settlement was, however,

marred by the failure once again to determine the reconstruction of Europe. At the opening of the negotiations, he had the idea of settling with France quickly and then completing the European arrangements in London. But, as he reported on May 5th, "the desire felt by Prussia and Austria to bring both Russia and France to some understanding upon the main principles of the Continental arrangements, in a secret article or otherwise, previously to our stipulating away our conquests, had led to a very tedious and elaborate examination of this very complicated question¹." Of the precise part played by Castlereagh in these discussions there is no complete record, for he wrote very little to his Cabinet about it. But Münster's despatches and other evidence leave no doubt that he took a strong line on the Polish question, even at Paris. His support was given wholly to Austria in refusing Alexander's demands, which included Cracow and Thorn, and he began the policy, which he was to follow at the Congress of Vienna, of trying to unite Austria and Prussia against the Tsar by securing Austria's consent to the annexation of the whole of Saxony to Prussia. In other German questions, and especially in the form to be taken by the Federation, he showed less interest, leaving them to Münster, unless some vital point arose. Though great efforts were made to settle all these questions, they were without avail, and the only express stipulations which the Treaty with France contained, besides the settlement of the Netherlands frontier, were the extension of the Austrian possessions to the Mincio, and the incorporation of Genoa in Sardinia. As to the rest, they were to be settled at a Congress to be held at Vienna in August, to which all the Powers of Europe, great or small, who had taken part in the War were to be invited. The Allied Powers, however, by a Secret Clause, reserved to themselves the right to determine the disposition of the conquered territories, and bound France to agree to their decisions. The Tsar and the King of Prussia, with Metternich and the other principal statesmen, had accepted the Prince Regent's invitation to London. Castlereagh and Metternich, therefore, hoped that all matters could be settled there, where the Poles would have less influence than at Paris. No one, at this time, regarded the coming Congress as anything more than an opportunity for communicating the decisions of the Great Powers to the rest of Europe and for adjusting minor points. They could not foresee that their discussions

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, May 5th, 1814. F.O. Continent Archives, 4; *British Diplomacy*, p. 180.

would bring Europe to the verge of war, and that over twelve months would be required before a final settlement could be effected.

These difficulties, in any case, did not loom large in the eyes of the British people, who cared little for the rest of the Continental settlement, if France was rendered impotent. The absence of vindictive conditions in the Treaty, such as France had inflicted so often on other countries, indeed, caused a great deal of discontent. "No Murders, No Torture, No Conflagration,—how ill the pretty Women of London bear it?"¹ wrote Whitbread; but he was himself delighted with the Treaty and honestly said so.

Castlereagh's return was something of a triumph, and the House of Commons rose to receive him when he entered it. The Treaty was approved without a division. Castlereagh's most serious difficulties, indeed, were in connexion with the events subsidiary to the settlement, some of which met with considerable criticism both in the House and at the Court. In the first place, the Norwegians, though their country had been ceded to Bernadotte by Denmark in the Treaty of Kiel in January, refused to submit and organised a national resistance. Disgusted as the Allies were with Bernadotte's conduct in 1814, they could not see their way to breaking with him completely. Thus Great Britain, in compliance with her Treaty engagements, was forced to assist in the subjection of Norway by a naval blockade—an odious necessity which Ministers had to defend against hot attacks from the Opposition. Spanish questions, also, caused great difficulty. Ferdinand, on his restoration, had straightway abolished the Spanish Cortes and returned to the ideals of the Middle Ages. The British had to see patriots with whom they had fought against Napoleon subjected to imprisonment and persecution. The abolition of the impracticable Constitution of 1812 caused little uneasiness to Castlereagh; but he protested vigorously, though without avail, against Ferdinand's increasing tyranny. The question of the Spanish Colonies was also a difficult one, in which we had a great interest, for our trade with them was growing by leaps and bounds. Nevertheless, the Treaty signed with Spain contained a clause binding Great Britain to strict neutrality in the struggle between Spain and her over-seas possessions. In the same Instrument, however, there was secured a stipulation which, like the "Barrier," went back to the 18th century; for, by a Secret Article, Ferdinand engaged not to renew the "Family Compact."

Most difficult of all the questions with which Castlereagh had to

¹ *Creaty Papers*, i. 191.

deal was the situation in Italy, where an extraordinary situation had arisen during the spring campaign, which had already caused him much uneasiness, and was to lead to much equivocal diplomacy before it was finally settled. Fortified by Aberdeen's consent, Metternich had hastened to conclude a treaty with Murat so early as January 3rd, 1814. It was urgently needed, if Austrian arms were to be immediately successful in Italy. For the Viceroy, with his small army of conscripts, successfully withstood all the attacks of Bellegarde's much larger forces. Murat was, therefore, not only recognised as King of Naples, but was promised some increase of territory and Austria's good offices to obtain his recognition by Great Britain and Austria's other Allies, as well as by the Sicilian Bourbons, who were to be given compensation elsewhere. But Murat was threatened from the south by the Anglo-Sicilian army of Bentinck, who was virtual Governor of the island, where he professed to cherish, as an instrument for the regeneration of the Italian people, the remarkable Constitution established by him in 1812.

Lord William Bentinck¹ is one of the most curious figures of this time. A military career of considerable success had made this *intransigent* Whig a Lieutenant-General at the age of 38 and the representative of a Tory Ministry in one of the most important posts in Europe. From Sicily, aided by sea power, Bentinck could strike at will at Spain or Naples, or further afield, if events proved propitious. To a man of his unmeasured ambition, masterful character and ultra-Whig views the temptations were immense. During the earlier part of the year 1813, he carried on in person tentative negotiations with Murat at Ponza, soon put aside to engage in a campaign in Catalonia which (at least not wholly by his fault) ended in failure. The close of the year found him back in Sicily, evolving great schemes for the liberation of the Italians by appealing to their sense of nationality, and endowing them with the institutions he had set up in Sicily. To these views, which, of course, were in direct opposition to those of his Government, he perhaps added others, even more extravagant, for the retention of Sicily as a British possession, and a model of Constitutional liberty to the oppressed Mediterranean peoples. Castle-reagh appears to have left him completely in the dark as to the Instructions which he had given to Aberdeen. He perhaps distrusted Bentinck's discretion. When, therefore, the latter received from Aberdeen Instructions to support Neipperg and Mier, the Austrian Envoys at Naples, and to conclude a treaty with Murat

¹ See *supra*, p. 380.

similar to that of Austria, he flatly refused. In spite of the vehement entreaties of the Austrians, he refused all cooperation with Murat, and it was only on February 3rd that he concluded an Armistice, which entirely ignored political considerations and merely suspended hostilities between the two forces. In this, he was only acting prudently, for he could not accept Instructions from Aberdeen on so vital a point¹. For his later conduct there can, however, be no excuse. He had his own plans for the Italian campaign, and absolutely refused to subordinate them to the necessities of the situation. On March 8th, he landed at Leghorn, but, instead of cooperating with Murat, he began an embittered controversy as to the control of Tuscany, which provided the King of Naples with an excellent pretext for not attacking the Viceroy and carrying out his obligations under the Austrian Treaty. The Hereditary Prince was allowed to address a proclamation to the Anglo-Sicilian army, which denounced Murat as a usurper. Even Sir Robert Wilson, Bentinck's fellow Whig, could find no excuses for this strange conduct, which is only to be explained by Bentinck's personal dislike of Murat and his rage at the complete overthrow of the plans that had long been fermenting in his own brain.

Meanwhile, Castlereagh and Metternich, engaged in the final struggle against Napoleon, had had scant leisure to deal with the Italian deadlock. Complaints against Bentinck, however, began to pour in at headquarters, and Castlereagh at last awoke to the situation. He approved Bentinck's conduct in merely signing an armistice; for, as has been seen, the offer to Murat had never been really to his liking, and Aberdeen had committed himself far too rashly. Metternich himself was dissatisfied with the Treaty, and made some alterations in its language. Castlereagh, however, had no alternative but to accept the situation, and he admitted that, at the moment when the Treaty was made, "it was both wise and necessary," while at the same time he urged a full indemnity for Ferdinand. On February 21st, he wrote to Bentinck that "The British Government are perfectly ready to act up to the spirit of the Austrian Treaty and to acknowledge Murat upon a peace upon two conditions: 1st That he exerts himself honourably in the war; and 2nd that a reasonable indemnity (it cannot be an equivalent) is found for the King of Sicily." When it gradually became clear that no headway was being made in Italy, Castlereagh

¹ See R. M. Johnston's article "Lord William Bentinck and Murat," in *The English Historical Review*, April 1904. But while Mr Johnston successfully establishes this point against M. Weil, he is in error in thinking that Aberdeen had no authority to sign. See above, p. 409.

grew all the more indignant. It was some time before he credited all the reports against Bentinck, and his just indignation was levied more against Murat himself and the Austrian Commander-in-Chief¹. But, by the end of March, the situation had become clear, and Bentinck was severely reproved in letters which Castlereagh wrote to him on April 2nd, which he made all the more incisive, inasmuch as the Sicilian Court had communicated direct to London the insinuations which, they asserted, Bentinck had allowed himself as to Great Britain becoming Sovereign of Sicily—a subject on which he was ordered at once to enlighten them as to the true views of the British Government. Castlereagh had, in fact, now determined to get rid of Bentinck as soon as possible, and William A'Court, a shrewd and moderate diplomatist of the true Tory creed, was nominated as his substitute at Palermo, while Bentinck was told that he might take leave of absence as soon as convenient. Before he departed, however, Bentinck was to involve Castlereagh in further embarrassments. On April 26th he issued a proclamation which promised the Genoese their independence. Castlereagh had already agreed, as has been seen, to assign Genoa to Sardinia. He at once repudiated Bentinck's action, and to a deputation from Genoa and Lombardy who came to Paris to plead for independence he was inflexible. He listened patiently, but could only advise them to make the best of their new Sovereigns². Bentinck's attempts to encourage Italian independence were all the more distasteful to Castlereagh, since it was associated with the idea of setting up new Constitutions in Italy on the model of that in Sicily, which in his opinion—and the facts bore him out—had been a complete failure. The experience of these doctrinaire Instruments, set up in Spain and Sicily, had, indeed, not been encouraging. That Castlereagh had judged accurately the main cause of their impotence is seen by a letter to Henry Wellesley (afterwards Lord Cowley) on May 10th.

I hope, if we are to encounter the hazards of a new constitutional experiment in Spain in addition to the many others now in progress in Europe, that the persons charged with the work will not fall into the inconceivable absurdity of banishing from the legislature the Ministers of the Crown; to which error, more perhaps than any other, may be attributed the incapacity which has distinguished the march of every one of these systems which has placed the main authorities of the Constitution in hostility instead of alliance with each other³.

¹ Castlereagh to Bentinck, February 4th, 15th, 21st, 1814. *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ix. 235, 237, 286, 362.

² Hansard, xxx. 391.

³ *Castlereagh Correspondence*, x. 26.

To Bentinck he wrote even more strongly—perhaps more strongly than he felt, since it was necessary to put a stop to the policy which might ruin Castlereagh's schemes at Paris.

"It is impossible not to perceive," he wrote on May 7th, "a great moral change coming on in Europe, and that the principles of freedom are in full operation. The danger is that the transition may be too sudden to ripen into anything likely to make the world better or happier. We have new Constitutions launched in France, Spain, Holland, and Sicily. Let us see the result before we encourage further attempts. The attempts may be made and we must abide the consequences, but I am sure it is better to retard than accelerate the operation of this most hazardous principle which is abroad.

"In Italy it is now the more necessary to abstain if we wish to act in concert with Austria and Sardinia. Whilst we had to drive the French out of Italy we were justified in running all risks; and with a view to general peace and tranquillity, I should prefer seeing the Italians await the insensible influence of what is going on elsewhere, than hazard their own internal quiet by an effort at this moment¹."

In this there is much truth, and the same common-sense is shown in Castlereagh's conversation with the Italians in Paris. But his hostility to Constitutional liberty was not merely one of form. On no single occasion in these years is Castlereagh found giving it any encouragement or sacrificing to it the cardinal point of his policy; union with Austria against Russia. His deliberate plan for perpetuating Austrian influence in the Peninsula he had inherited from Pitt, and he applied the prescription only too well when the opportunity came². It was a fundamental part of his policy to the end of his career; and, indeed, it was, in a sense, part of the Tory creed until Italy won her independence. At the same time, it must be remembered that Castlereagh's policy was itself a necessary element in the struggle against Napoleon, and that Bentinck's wild-cat schemes, which had little real support among the Italians themselves, would have only produced chaos and civil war—whereby ultimately the Coalition's main objects might have been lost.

Bentinck had, however, saved Castlereagh from the recognition of Murat as King of Naples. It might, indeed, be claimed that Great

¹ *Castlereagh Correspondence*, x. 18.

² There is, of course, no truth whatever in the story first put forward by Bianchi, that as early as July, 1813, Castlereagh had concluded a Secret Treaty with Metternich concerning Italy, the existence of which is based on a supposed letter from Metternich to Castlereagh, dated May 26th, 1814. Fournier and others have proved the impossibility of the document, which would refute itself, even if examination of the British and Austrian Archives had not shown it to be a forgery.

Britain was morally bound to support him; but, meanwhile, his relations to her were only defined by the Armistice. Castlereagh had thus, to some extent, a free hand, and already there were signs that the interests of the Sicilian Bourbons had not been forgotten by the British Government. In June, the Duke of Orleans pleaded Ferdinand's cause at Paris and London, and the Prince Regent did not hesitate to promise him his support, while Liverpool did not conceal his hostility to Murat, and even Castlereagh, though cautiously, gave the Bourbons some hope¹. This interview was, of course, a profound secret, but even publicly in the House Castlereagh had spoken of the Neapolitan Question as not yet decided². The greatest obstacle was indeed the folly of Ferdinand himself. In July, Bentinck's last act had been to allow the King to resume power in Sicily, though he had carefully safeguarded the Constitution on which he had built such extravagant hopes. But it was not long before A'Court reported that King Ferdinand was breaking his promises, and, however hostile to the Constitutional régime, the British Government could not immediately betray those whom they had put in power, and protected for so long. It remained to be seen whether Murat could utilise these difficulties, so as to win his recognition from the British Government at the coming Congress. Meanwhile, in the north of Italy Austrian influence was dominant and Lord Burghersh, who had been appointed British Minister to the Grand-duke of Tuscany, was well-fitted for cooperating with the Austrians, and for removing the ideas which Bentinck and Sir Robert Wilson had spread of Great Britain's interest in Constitutional liberty.

III. THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA

The numerous negotiations made imperative by the close of the War had not prevented the questions reserved for settlement at the coming Congress from being attentively considered. Castlereagh was, however, disappointed in his hope that affairs could be brought nearer to a solution during the visit of the Sovereigns and statesmen to England. On the main questions, indeed, no progress at all was made. The lavish and warm, if not very refined, hospitality offered to the Tsar and the King of Prussia took up most of their time. The four Ministers managed to meet for business; the stubbornness of the Russians, however, prevented anything being done, though a good deal of dis-

¹ Weil, *Murat*, i. 127 ff.

² Hansard, xxviii. 464. (In response to a remark of Canning's in favour of the Bourbons. Cf. Weil, *op. cit.* i. 167.)

cussion took place. Of the actual details of these discussions, little is known, except that a serious attempt was made to come to some agreement. It would appear that Castlereagh was anxious to avoid a rupture with the Tsar in London; for Metternich complained of his lack of support to Austrian policy. Alexander, indeed, seemed to look beyond the Prince Regent and his Ministers for support. He had long been in touch with the Whigs through Sir Robert Wilson and others. Now, like his strange and unconventional sister Catharine, who had preceded him to England, the Tsar seemed to go out of his way to show marked attention to the Ministry's opponents. More than this, the Grand-duchess was with difficulty prevented from recognising the unhappy wife of the Prince Regent, whose rupture with her husband was now complete. The Grand-duchess saw much of the Princess Charlotte, and to her influence and that of Princess Lieven was attributed the uncompromising refusal given to the suit of the Prince of Orange. The result was that Alexander mortally offended the Prince Regent, and made a very bad impression on his Ministers. The Cabinet as a whole, and particularly Liverpool, had been scarcely content with Castlereagh's policy of support to Austria. A more diplomatic behaviour on the part of Alexander might have done much to smooth his path to his Polish Kingdom. But when Czartoryski and Radziwill were seen in close conference with the Whigs, the Tory Ministry naturally became suspicious. Alexander attributed his failure to the intrigues of Metternich and Count von Merveldt, the Austrian Ambassador, who doubtless let slip no opportunity of increasing these suspicions. But the Tsar had only himself to blame for conduct apparently dictated, partly by a personal dislike to the Prince Regent, which may perhaps be pardoned, and partly by a conviction that the unpopularity of the Prince and some of his Ministers with the London mob indicated that a change of Government would soon take place. The result was a capital blunder, which rendered of no avail later efforts on the part of Russia to influence the British Cabinet against Castlereagh.

In these circumstances, the only decisions of importance to be recorded were the approval by the Allies of the Constitution of the new Netherlands kingdom, to which the Belgian Provinces were now provisionally assigned (though the frontiers of the new State with Germany still waited on other arrangements) and the signing of a Protocol, by which the Four Powers agreed to keep at least 75,000 troops on a war footing until the Congress closed. It was, also, soon

found that the Congress could not meet in August, as had been intended. Castlereagh could not finish his parliamentary business in time, and the Tsar therefore insisted on a postponement to a still later date, in order that he might return to Russia. The opening was accordingly arranged for the beginning of October; but the four Ministers agreed to meet at an earlier date before the arrival of the Sovereigns, so that the procedure of the Congress might be arranged among themselves. For, although they had made no progress in their disputes, yet they were still firmly resolved not to allow the settlement to go out of their hands.

The interval of July and August was spent by Castlereagh in winding up parliamentary affairs and in the transactions narrated at the close of our last section. But correspondence was also carried on between Castlereagh, Metternich and Hardenberg on the Polish-Saxon question. The former two Ministers endeavoured to convince Hardenberg, now that he was away from Russian influence, of the dangers of Alexander's Polish plans. Hardenberg's reply to Castlereagh, which entered at length into all his plans for Germany, showed little sign of breaking with the Tsar, and displayed considerable jealousy and suspicion of both Austria and Bavaria. It was evident how difficult it would prove to persuade the German Powers to resist Alexander's Polish plans, which every intelligence from Petrograd and Warsaw showed to be more intently pursued than ever¹.

Castlereagh had also, throughout this period, been in close touch with Talleyrand. That experienced diplomatist, who was already engaged in planning the disruption of the Chaumont Alliance, was at the same time the Minister of a Bourbon King. The old French connexion with Poland did, indeed, pledge him to some exertion on her behalf; but his real interests, and those of Lewis XVIII, which he was forced to consider equally with those of France, lay elsewhere. To save Saxony from Prussia and drive Murat from Naples were the main objects for which he invented the doctrine of legitimacy, on which his famous Instructions were founded. Both Alexander and Metternich had made overtures at Paris, but it was to Great Britain that Talleyrand looked for support. When, therefore, Castlereagh gave him an opportunity by communicating the Convention of June 29th with some courteous explanations, he made every endeavour to establish a connexion with him. Throughout July and August, he

¹ Castlereagh to Hardenberg, August 8th, 1814; Hardenberg to Castlereagh, May 27th, 1814. F.O. Continent. Archives, 20; *British Diplomacy*, p. 190.

emphasised to Sir Charles Stuart, and later to Wellington, the coincidence of French and British interests and the necessity of the two "Constitutional" Powers of Europe acting together. To these overtures Castlereagh replied by a cautious but unmistakable response. He made it clear that he had no intention of separating from his Allies; but he encouraged Talleyrand to develop his views and promised to visit Paris on his way to Vienna. His main object was to secure the support of Lewis XVIII and Talleyrand to his policy of resisting Alexander's Polish plans. This support was actually offered with an embarrassing readiness, and Castlereagh had to point out that "the Four" still intended to settle matters in accordance with the Secret Article of the Treaty of Paris. But he promised to do his best to harmonise the views of the Allies with those of the French Government, and, with this understanding, preceded Talleyrand to Vienna, where the Ministers of the Four Powers proposed by a preliminary discussion to settle the procedure and constitution of the Congress, before the representatives of the other States assembled¹.

Castlereagh arrived in Vienna on September 13th. Stewart and Cathcart accompanied him as Plenipotentiaries, and the former (now made a Baron in his own right) was Ambassador to the Austrian Court. Aberdeen had declined further employment, and it may be imagined that Castlereagh did not press him. In his stead, he brought the Earl of Clancarty, a member of the Ministry and recently, since the return of the Prince of Orange, British representative at the Hague, where he had already obtained a very commanding position. Stewart owed his position entirely to his brother's affection, and scarcely anyone approved of his appointment. He played a subordinate part, though his relations with the Prussian military chiefs were not without importance. His egregious vanity and love of display, which obtained for him the nickname of "Lord Pumpnickel," made him one of the standing jests of the Congress. Cathcart was far less in evidence, and was only nominated lest Alexander should be offended. It was on Clancarty alone that Castlereagh could rely for really hard work and business capacity. The stiffest of Tories, and not too subtle or quick-minded, he was a conscientious and consistent subordinate, who could be trusted to carry out his chief's ideas. Throughout, he did much valuable work, and, after Wellington left, he handled the complicated diplomacy connected with the closing of the Congress

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, September 3rd, 1814. F.O. Continent. 7; *British Diplomacy*, p. 191.

with considerable skill. Edward Cooke, a permanent official of great experience, was the principal member of Castlereagh's staff. He stood in the most confidential relations not only to Castlereagh but also to the Prime-Minister, with whom he corresponded in private letters which retailed much cynical gossip. The rest of the staff, besides Castlereagh's discreet Private Secretary, Planta, was composed of four young sprigs of the nobility and five commoners from the Foreign Office. Six of these remained during the whole period. Wellington brought over three more of them during his stay, and Clancarty two, and one other at the close. This small staff, which was overworked throughout the whole period, was one of the most zealous and discreet of those at Vienna. Lady Castlereagh accompanied her husband, and the conjugal bliss of the British Ambassador caused much amusement to Vienna society. The fourteen rooms taken in the Auge-Gottes were not sufficiently imposing for this establishment, which was removed to the Minoritenplatz. There, a grave and decorous hospitality was dispensed by Lady Castlereagh, which the Viennese found extraordinarily dull. Many wits were inspired by the fact that she wore her husband's Garter as a hair ornament. Divine service was held every Sunday at Lord Stewart's residence for all the English in Vienna, and, in deference to their susceptibilities, the first performance of Beethoven's new concerto was postponed to a weekday. But, however deficient in some of the arts which characterised the Congress in general, Castlereagh's establishment was one of the most zealous and discreet, and the Secret Police entirely failed to penetrate its secrets¹.

From his Government at home Castlereagh only received a single definite official Instruction during the whole of his stay at Vienna; and this he deliberately ignored. He reported to his colleagues, however, at fairly frequent intervals, and maintained with Liverpool a private correspondence of considerable length. The Prime-Minister conveyed to him the sense of the Cabinet on the large general questions which arose at Vienna, as well as the state of public opinion in England, and thus undoubtedly influenced him on certain points. But Vienna was too far away for much to be accomplished in this way. The despatches often took a fortnight to reach their destination, and, before they could be answered, events had changed. The Cabinet, in truth, displayed only a moderate interest in the settlement since the main points of British policy were already secured. It was essential, for the sake of

¹ See C. K. Webster, *The Congress of Vienna*.

public opinion at home, that every effort should be made to secure the Abolition of the Slave-trade; but in other matters it was not thought that Great Britain ought to play a very decided part. Events, however, forced Castlereagh's colleagues to pay more attention to questions of foreign policy than they wished. The Opposition, which under Whitbread's influence had been studiously moderate during the crisis of 1814, saw in the embarrassing prolongation of the Congress a means of harassing the Ministry. The propaganda of Talleyrand and others had some effect in London. Thus Bragge, Bathurst, Robinson and Vansittart found themselves persistently attacked by Whitbread, Ponsonby and others, especially on the questions of Genoa, Saxony and Naples; and they found it exceedingly difficult to return convincing replies. They took refuge, for the most part, in an obstinate refusal to furnish any information whatever about the course of the negotiations, while Liverpool pressed Castlereagh to return as soon as possible to their assistance. Neither this nor the alarm produced by various developments of the Saxon Question had, however, very much influence on the course of events at Vienna, where, from the first, Castlereagh took a prominent part in all the leading Questions, and whence he refused to return until all danger of a rupture was at an end.

For Castlereagh had gone to the Congress, not only with fixed principles, but with a plan for carrying them out, and a conviction that upon his own efforts, more than upon anything else, depended the reconstruction of Europe. Unlike his colleagues, he regarded Great Britain as part of the Continent, and he saw clearly how difficult it would be for her to keep clear of any conflict, if a peaceful settlement was not obtainable. Thus, he was prepared to play his part in the forefront of the battle, not merely on such questions as the Netherlands, in which all recognised that his country had a special interest, but in the more difficult and even more important, if more remote, disputes as to Poland and Saxony, on the solution of which the whole reconstruction of Central Europe depended. More clearly than any of his colleagues, he looked on the problem as a whole, and, continuing the ideas put forward in Pitt's paper in 1805¹, he wished to establish a Balance of Power in Europe, which should prevent any one State from threatening the rest. The First Peace of Paris had allayed for the moment the fear of France, to whose Government Castlereagh was already looking for assistance in the prosecution of his plans, and this fear was partly replaced by that of Russia, whose

¹ See above, p. 400.

expansion had caused Pitt so much anxiety in the period immediately preceding the Revolution. It must also be allowed that, blind as he was to the importance of recognising national and Liberal forces, which he regarded as mere survivals of the dangerous influence of the French Revolution, yet he had ideals of a new system of government for Europe which might perchance prevent the recurrence of a period of warfare such as had been lately experienced.

To produce a Balance of Power—the “just equilibrium,” as it is so often called in despatches and documents of this period—Castlereagh endeavoured to strengthen by all the means at his disposal the two principal States of the Centre. During the Napoleonic period, Austria, and even more completely Prussia, had been reduced in extent, while not only France but also Russia had secured great acquisitions of territory. France had now been driven back to her old frontiers, though it was thought that she might again become dangerous to the liberties of the small States which fringed them. Russia had obtained Finland, a large portion of Polish territory and acquisitions in the south, particularly Bessarabia, and she was now aiming at absorbing (though under a separate Constitution) almost the whole of Poland. To protect Europe against both French and Russian preponderance, it was imperative that the Centre should be made sufficiently strong to resist them. Castlereagh perceived that this object could not be obtained merely by a territorial redistribution, but necessitated the establishment of cordial relations between Prussia and Austria, and an amicable settlement of the disputes still dividing them. By helping forward such an agreement, he hoped to produce a combination which would prevent the Tsar from carrying out his Polish plans. A strong Federal Germany would also be the natural result of the union of the two Powers, and an impenetrable barrier might thus be erected both on the Rhine and the Vistula. As for Italy, he had long regarded that peninsula as the natural sphere of Austrian influence. The domination of Austria would prevent that of France, which might threaten British sea-power in the Mediterranean, and it has been seen that, so early as August 1813, he found it necessary to encourage Austrian expansion in this direction, with a view to preventing her from looking for compensation at the expense of the Turkish Empire.

Such principles were, no doubt, laid down in the Instructions which he, apparently, took with him, but which unfortunately have not been preserved. At any rate, they were the principles on which he founded

his reports to his timid and reluctant Cabinet in the course of his stay at Vienna. No doubt, also, there were added covering phrases as to the advantages of the restoration of a completely independent Poland, if circumstances permitted. But Castlereagh had no illusions on this subject. He knew that the three Eastern Powers would never consent to give up their spoils, and, though he was careful to make, at the outset, and subsequently as the occasion required, official representations as to the desire of his Cabinet for the reestablishment of Polish Independence, such declarations were merely intended to safeguard his Government against possible attacks in Parliament. For, from so early a date as February 1814, Castlereagh had announced to the Austrian statesmen that he would not tolerate any separate Polish Kingdom, whether openly declared or created in some indirect manner, and since then all his efforts had been directed to combining Prussia and Austria in a refusal to give up any part of their shares of the Polish Partitions to Russia. In order to detach Prussia from the influence of the Tsar, it had been necessary to promise her the bribe which Alexander had already offered her at Kalisch—the whole of the kingdom of Saxony. Metternich had, very reluctantly, made a verbal promise to this effect so long ago as January 1814, and Castlereagh had accepted this arrangement as the basis of the agreement between the two Powers. In the discussions at Paris and London, and subsequently, though other points of difference had arisen, particularly as regards Mainz, which Austria wished Bavaria to acquire, so as to facilitate her own acquisition of Salzburg from that Power, this arrangement had been maintained by Metternich, without any written agreement having been exchanged. There was, however, in Austria a strong party opposed to it. This feeling was naturally shared by the smaller German Powers, who were in effect guilty of all the offences of which Saxony was accused, while the preservation of Saxony was the principal point in the Instructions which Talleyrand had drawn up for himself, and even took precedence of his desire to dethrone Murat. Nevertheless, Castlereagh founded his whole plan of campaign on Austria's consent to the absorption of all Saxony by Prussia.

It was with issues of such magnitude impending that Metternich, Castlereagh, Hardenberg and Nesselrode began their preliminary discussions, on September 15th. Their first task was to make a plan for the deliberations of the Congress; and none of them appear at the outset to have quite understood how difficult this task was. In these

discussions, Castlereagh took up a slightly different attitude to that of his colleagues. He agreed that "the Four" must preserve the "initiative" granted to them by the Secret Article of the Treaty of Paris, and arrange all matters between themselves before they were discussed with other Powers. But he carried out his promise to Talleyrand to do his best to make the position of France as little derogatory as was possible under the circumstances. He acquiesced in the strongly expressed wish of his colleagues to exclude her from the preliminary discussions, but entered a protest in the Protocol of September 22nd, against this decision being too bluntly laid down. Similarly, he was anxious that the decision of the Great Powers to keep matters in their own hands should be made as palatable as possible to the smaller Powers, and that they should maintain their control "without openly assuming authority¹." He failed, however, to convince his colleagues, and, when Talleyrand appeared at Vienna, he found no difficulty in preventing the acceptance of the schemes of "the Four," with the result that the opening of the Congress was postponed, while the points at issue began to be discussed amongst the Plenipotentiaries of the Four in an informal way, but with the fixed intention of producing some settlement, before either France or the smaller Powers were allowed any opportunity to put forward their views in any formal manner.

In the discussions on the Polish and Saxon questions thus opened, Castlereagh played a prominent and, in some respects, a dominant rôle. The formal agreement between Austria and Prussia as to Saxony still hung fire, and, until this was reached, neither Hardenberg nor Metternich could assume too bold an attitude towards the Tsar. It was on Castlereagh, therefore, that the main burden fell of arguing the case, and endeavouring to make the Tsar understand that his plans for a kingdom of Poland under the Russian Crown were opposed by all his three Allies. A diplomatic duel thus began of extreme bitterness, which very nearly indeed produced a European war. If Castlereagh suffered some heavy defeats, he managed at last to produce a settlement which he could conscientiously defend, and the courage and address with which he managed his attack have rarely been excelled by a British statesman.

Though Nesselrode retained his position of principal Minister, Alexander kept the control of affairs in his own hands, and was

¹ For details on these points of organisation see C. K. Webster, *The Congress of Vienna*, Part II.

advised by a group of foreigners of whom Czartoryski, Capodistrias, Stein and Anstett had the most influence. Castlereagh's negotiations during this first period were, therefore, conducted with the Tsar himself, and it was only when Alexander had completely failed to overcome the stubborn resistance offered to his plans that he asked for the employment of the regular diplomatic channels. The discussions began with two interviews at the end of September; and, from the outset, it was apparent that there was little hope of agreement. Alexander, doubtless with much sincerity, defended his policy as one dictated by a wish to help Poland, and not merely by Russian interests or personal ambition. He hinted, however, that he was prepared to modify his views as to the erection of a Polish kingdom, and he had already, in deference to the loudly expressed wishes of his Russian advisers, abandoned the idea of including in it Lithuania and White Russia. Castlereagh, with great frankness, insisted that the Tsar's plans ran counter to the wishes of all his Allies as well as of his own Russian subjects. He said that, so far as England was concerned, the creation of an independent Poland would be welcomed, and he secured an admission at the outset that this course was rendered impossible by the attitude of all the Three Eastern Powers. He refused to admit, therefore, Alexander's plea of a moral duty towards the Poles. So long as Russia denied them full independence, she could only rely on the Treaties concluded between the three Powers to justify herself, and these precluded the granting of a Constitution (which, as Castlereagh held, would cause grave discontent among those Poles who were left under Prussian and Austrian rule), and bound Russia to an equitable Partition with her Allies. At the end of a second interview, the discussion grew warm, and Alexander hinted, though in a less menacing tone than he was employing towards Metternich and Talleyrand, that he was in possession, and meant to remain so. To this threat Castlereagh returned an answer which he was to make on more than one occasion during the course of the Congress; that only the recognition by Europe could enable a Power to enjoy new possessions with tranquillity¹.

Meanwhile, Castlereagh was working hard to cement the tentative Alliance already formed between Austria and Prussia. Both Metternich and Hardenberg were anxious to come to an agreement, but both had, throughout the Congress, to reckon with forces in

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, October 2nd, October 9th, 1814. *F.O. Continent*, 77 *British Diplomacy*, pp. 197, 201.

their own country which made a decided course of action difficult. Hardenberg's principal obstacle was his King, who, in his heartfelt gratitude to the Tsar, found it almost impossible to oppose his wishes. There was, also, a strong military party to reckon with in Prussia, who were not only determined to secure all Saxony, but were passionately opposed to allowing Mainz, which they regarded as the key to southern Germany, to remain in Bavarian hands. Metternich was himself ready to yield Saxony to Prussia. But Stadion, Starhemberg and others were urgent against such a course, and, if he was to satisfy them, it was necessary that the loss of Saxony should be compensated by large concessions to Austrian interests, not only in Poland, but on the whole of the German Questions, including not only Mainz but the form of the Confederation, which was now being tentatively discussed in a Special Committee.

Castlereagh could do little to strengthen the infirm will of the King of Prussia, though he early made the attempt; but he succeeded in bringing the two Ministers to an arrangement, which, though it did not completely satisfy either of them, would, he hoped, prove a stable Alliance. The initiative came from him, and without his intervention the experiment could hardly have been tried. It was he who drew up a Memorandum as to the method by which the negotiation should be handled, for it was imperative that his Allies should not use arguments which, as a Constitutional Minister, he could not defend. He wished the offer of an entirely independent Poland to be put forward at the outset by the two Powers, being convinced that Alexander could not accept it: so that the arguments for Partition might be more strongly supported by Great Britain and France. He was anxious, also, that the negotiations should be begun as soon as possible, for Alexander was every day committing himself more deeply in private conversations to the plan which he had laid down for himself. Hardenberg, however, told his Allies that he would take no step in the Polish question until he was fully assured of the possession of Saxony. On October 9th, he addressed letters to Castlereagh and Metternich categorically demanding an answer in writing to his demand. Castlereagh's answer of October 11th was explicit. He gave formal consent to the total absorption of Saxony by Prussia and, provided she loyally supported his Polish plans, offered no objections to her immediately taking over the provisional administration of the country from Prince Repnin, the Russian governor. He also denied the King of Saxony's right to any indemnity, for he had no desire to

complicate the rest of the settlement by the necessity of finding another realm for Frederick Augustus. Metternich's answer was more difficult to obtain; but he at last yielded to Hardenberg's pressure. His answer, on October 22nd, gave a reluctant consent to the annexation of Saxony, but only on the express condition that Prussia should, in her turn, consent to arrangements satisfactory to Austria in the rest of Germany. This was scarcely an Alliance, and Castlereagh only secured the consent of both Hardenberg and Metternich to joint action after a long and stormy interview. Even then, some of the points in dispute between them were merely waived for the moment. They, however, agreed to follow the plan of action drawn up by Castlereagh himself, and thus the formal offer of an independent Poland was made. But the real intention was to confine Russia to the eastern bank of the Vistula¹.

Meanwhile, the original controversy between Alexander and Castlereagh had been continued by an exchange of formal notes. Castlereagh had sent the Emperor, for his information, the Memorandum which he had drawn up as a basis of joint action between the Powers. He was embarrassed at receiving from the Emperor a vigorous reply, of which Czartoryski was the author, though Alexander assumed personal responsibility for it. Nevertheless, Castlereagh felt compelled to return an answer in which he adroitly ascribed the Russian Memorandum to Alexander's advisers, and thus was able to restate his case with the utmost possible firmness². Even then, this rather futile method of negotiation was not brought to a close, for a final answer was returned by Alexander, together with a cold note asking that the negotiations should henceforth be carried on by the regular channels of communication. Neither party to the dispute had yielded in the slightest degree, and Castlereagh was confirmed in his opinion that it was not by this method that the Tsar would be made to give way. Only a united demand by the 'Three Powers could, he thought, force the Tsar to a compromise³.

But the Alliance, the making of which had occupied all the month of October, fell to pieces almost before it was put into force. Advantage was taken of a visit of the three Sovereigns to Buda-Pesth to make

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, October 24th, 1814. F.O. Continent. 7; *British Diplomacy*, p. 212.

² Cooke was suspected of having drawn up this and some others of Castlereagh's notes; but it was not Castlereagh's habit to entrust such important work to subordinates, however competent and trustworthy.

³ Castlereagh to Liverpool, November 5th, 1814. F.O. Continent. 8; *British Diplomacy*, p. 222.

the onset on the Tsar, Castlereagh purposely leaving the affair in the hands of Metternich and Hardenberg. Alexander was furious and heaped bitter reproaches on the two Ministers in the presence of their masters. Frederick William was not proof against the charge of ingratitude, and withdrew his support from Hardenberg. Castlereagh's scheme thus completely failed. Hardenberg refused to follow up the first attempt, and suggested compromises which Metternich could not accept. Nor could he give any guarantee that he would join with Austria in enforcing these conditions, if the Tsar refused to accept them, as he surely would. The situation which Castlereagh had been dreading and which it had been his object to avoid, even more than the increase in Russian power, had now been brought about. If Austria could not obtain a Polish frontier, she refused to consent to the incorporation of Saxony in Prussia; which meant that the two German Powers would become completely estranged. This Castlereagh had foreseen, as he explained to his Cabinet in narrating his failure, and he clearly perceived the consequences that might ensue.

"I deemed it," he reported on November 11th¹, "of great importance to contribute as far as depended upon me to this concert; considering the establishment of Russia in the heart of Germany not only as constituting a great danger in itself, but as calculated to establish a most pernicious influence both in the Austrian and Prussian Cabinets; and I also foresaw, that if these two Powers, from distrust of each other, gave up the Polish point as desperate, the contest in negotiation would then turn upon Saxony, Mayence and other German points, and through the contention of Austria and Prussia, the supremacy of Russia would be established in all directions, and upon every question: whereas an understanding previously established on German affairs gave some chance of ameliorating the Polish arrangement, and, in case of its failure, afforded the best if not the only means of counteracting the Russian influence in the other European arrangements...."

This was his defence for agreeing to the annexation of Saxony by Prussia, which he knew could not be palatable to his colleagues, and at the same time he explained somewhat anxiously how he came to assume so prominent a part in the negotiations. Though the Polish question was remote, he contended that all British interests, even her interests in the Netherlands, were ultimately bound up in securing a pacific settlement.

"I have certainly been led from circumstances," he continued, "to take a more active share in the discussions on this question than I should have permitted myself to do if it had been any part of my policy to push the

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, November 11th, 1814. F.O. Continent. 8; *British Diplomacy*, p. 229.

Polish point to a hostile issue. In preparing for so serious an alternative, I should have felt the propriety, as a British Minister, of preserving a greater degree of reserve: it being the province of Great Britain to support rather than lead, on such occasions. But in proportion as I felt that an effort ought to be made successively, by conciliation, by moderation, by persuasion, by pressure of argument, and ultimately if necessary by an imposing negotiation, uniting the general sentiments of Europe upon sound and popular grounds, and not by armies, I felt the less precluded from taking a forward part. Some advantages have perhaps resulted from my being the person to do so, as the same arguments, had they been urged by the parties most interested, might have rendered accommodation more difficult...."

In requesting approval of this line of conduct he laid down for the benefit of the Cabinet the principles on which he conceived it was founded.

In the first place, so to conduct the arrangements to be framed for the Congress, as to make the establishment of a just equilibrium in Europe the first object of my attention, and to consider the assertion of minor points of interest as subordinate to this great end. Secondly, to use my best endeavours to support the Powers who had contributed to save Europe by their exertions, in their just pretensions to be liberally re-established upon the scale to which their treaties entitled them to lay claim, and not to be deterred from doing so by the necessity of adopting, for this end, measures which, although not unjust, are nevertheless painful and unpopular in themselves. And, thirdly, to endeavour to combine this latter duty to our friends and Allies with as much mildness and indulgence even to the offending states, as circumstances would permit.

It was for these objects, he said, that he had combatted Russia's plans so warmly. But he was convinced that a milder policy would have produced worse results, and he was not hopeful of the future.

"Your Lordship may rest assured," he concluded, "that no effort on my part shall be omitted to prevent disunion and still more war; but I am confident I speak the universal sentiment, when I declare my perfect conviction, that, unless the Emperor of Russia can be brought to a more moderate and sound course of public conduct, the peace, which we have dearly purchased, will be but of short duration."

The Cabinet had need of these explanations and admonitions; for the proceedings at the Congress were now beginning to be the cause of public alarm throughout all Europe. Talleyrand's opposition had prevented any plan being accepted for the formal opening of the Congress, and he had skilfully fomented the jealousy of all the small Powers at their exclusion from any important business. While all the energies of the Four Powers were directed to the Polish-Saxon

question, but little progress could be made on any of the other points of dispute. So long as Austria and Prussia were at enmity, the German Committee could come to no conclusion, and its meetings soon ceased altogether. Of Italian Questions, only the incorporation of Genoa in Piedmont, which had already been settled by the Treaty of Paris, could be formally considered. Though public opinion in England was not seriously interested in the main Questions in dispute at Vienna, yet the attitude of the Opposition in the House of Commons was very different from what it had been during Castlereagh's absence in the early part of the year. The conclusion of peace had liberated them from all such restraints as they had at that time felt, and, as the rumours of dissensions at Vienna grew more and more prevalent, they began a vigorous and concerted attack. Talleyrand and others made it their business to convey to the public as much information as possible, and it was not long before tolerably authentic news of Castlereagh's note on Saxony reached London. Whitbread took the first opportunity to uphold the cause of the Saxon King, while the Whigs also defended Alexander, declaring that he wished to restore the independence of Poland. The Ministers, in the face of Castlereagh's pessimistic despatches, found great difficulty in coping with these attacks; and their task was all the more uncongenial, since none of them were sincerely convinced of the necessity or wisdom of Castlereagh's conduct. They cared little about the Continent, except to keep out of trouble; and the prominent part that their Plenipotentiary was playing in the thorny questions of Saxony and Poland gradually began to create a real feeling of alarm. This was expressed in Liverpool's private letters to Vienna, which, without giving any specific Instructions, dwelt continually on the difficulties of the Ministry in Parliament, and urged a cautious line of policy. At the end of October, Vansittart (who was much embarrassed by the financial questions which had arisen on the conclusion of peace) attacked Castlereagh's Polish policy in a Memorandum which was duly forwarded to Vienna; and these warnings were repeated in November¹.

Yet at the Congress, after a short interval, Castlereagh continued his policy of active mediation. He was far too much involved in the negotiations to play a passive rôle there, and he never wavered in his belief that it was only by his own active participation in the negotiations

¹ Liverpool to Castlereagh, October 28th, 1814, November 2nd, November 18th. Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, ix. 382, 401, 438.

that a rupture could be averted, which, if it took place, must involve all Europe and ultimately, therefore, Great Britain, in war. Throughout November, the relations between the three Powers grew steadily worse. Hardenberg made some pretence of endeavouring to induce Alexander to yield, and after his failure still insisted on the retention of Saxony. Since he could no longer obtain it from Metternich, he went over completely to the Russian side, and it was not long before the chances of war were openly discussed at Vienna. On November 8th, Prince Repnin, the Russian Governor of Saxony, handed over the administration to the Prussians, with, as he declared in his proclamation, the consent of Austria and Great Britain. This act, designed by Alexander to foment the differences between Austria and Prussia, produced exactly the effect which he had anticipated, and caused, moreover, great discussion throughout Europe and a special debate in the British Parliament. For some time, Castlereagh kept away from these discussions, which were prolonged by an illness of Alexander; but, by the beginning of December, affairs had assumed so alarming an aspect that he was approached on all sides for help in order to arrive at a settlement, and he took up once more his rôle of Mediator. He had now, however, to pursue a different plan. A Polish settlement such as he had desired, he felt to be now impossible, since Prussia had refused to combine with Austria to extort it from Alexander. The great question now was that of Saxony, and as to this Castlereagh threw his whole weight on the side of Austria. His change of attitude was attributed by public gossip at the Congress, which later found expression in the House of Commons, to a change of Instructions from home. This was, however, not a true statement of the case. Liverpool did, indeed, suggest to Castlereagh in his letters, that the total extinction of Saxony was not popular in England.

"I ought to apprise you," he wrote on November 18th, "that there is a strong feeling in this country respecting Saxony. The case against the King appears to me, I confess, to be complete, if it is expedient to act upon it; but the objection is to the annihilation of the whole of Saxony as an independent Power, particularly considering the part which the Saxon troops took in the operations on the Elbe. Considering the prominent part which Saxony has always taken in the affairs of Germany, it would certainly be very desirable that a *noyau* of it at least should be preserved, even if it were under some other branch of the Saxon family; and I am fully convinced that the King of Prussia would gain more in character and influence by agreeing to such an arrangement than he would lose by any reasonable sacrifice¹."

¹ Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, ix. 438.

There was, however, no vehement feeling in Great Britain on this subject, in spite of the efforts of various diplomatic agents to foment it, and *The Times*, which attached far more importance to the establishment of Polish independence than to the preservation of the Saxon monarchy, probably represented the views of those sufficiently interested in the affairs of the Congress to have any opinion at all.

Castlereagh's change of front, in fact, though approved and commended by the Cabinet, was the natural result of his own actions, and not dictated from home. He sought, indeed, not the preservation of the whole of Saxony, but a compromise which would enable Austria and Prussia to come together once more and free the latter from Russian influence; and, as will be seen, after a two months' struggle he was successful in bringing his plan to fruition.

Until the beginning of December, Castlereagh made no attempt to reopen the negotiations. When, however, Alexander had peremptorily rejected the suggestions which Hardenberg had hesitatingly put forward as a means of "saving his face," and Metternich had intimated that, in such circumstances, Austria withdrew her consent to the Prussian annexation of Saxony, it was imperative that he should declare his attitude, before an open rupture of relations between the two German Powers took place. Hardenberg's Notes had begun to assume a menacing tone, and Castlereagh was thus induced to seek an interview with him in the first days of December, in order to make it clear that, in the new aspect of affairs which had arisen as a consequence of the failure to oppose Alexander, he supported the Austrian case. He took with him the extract from Liverpool's private letter of November 18th, quoted above, in order to show that his change of view was in accordance with the wishes of his Government. Hardenberg met him with menacing words, declaring that he "would run all risks rather than return home under such an humiliation." Castlereagh's answer was the same as he had given to Alexander when he used similar language with regard to Poland.

"I represented," he reported, "that this was not a case of war, that he was in occupation of Saxony, and that I apprehended no one would think of removing him hostilely from thence; but that he could not regard an unacknowledged claim as constituting a good title, and that he never could, in conscience or honour, advise his sovereign to make the mere refusal of a recognition cause of war against other states: That Prussia would then remain in a state of disquietude and doubt, compelled to remain armed, and that his return to Berlin would, under such circumstances, be more

painful than if he brought back the accession of all the Powers of Europe to an equal extent of dominion, though differently constituted¹."

Such language was not without effect. Hardenberg promised at least to consider any proposal which Austria might make, and Castlereagh hastened to Metternich to endeavour to make this as conciliatory as possible. But the omens were not favourable, and in a private letter Castlereagh directed the attention of his Cabinet to the chances of war and to the necessity of his interference, if it was to be prevented. It was impossible, he pointed out, for Great Britain to keep out of such a war for any length of time; her engagements to the Netherlands, if nothing else, would bring her in. He suggested, therefore, that the only chance of peace was an Armed Mediation between the three Eastern Powers, and that, in order to make this effective, France should be asked to join Great Britain in such action. By this means, she would be prevented from fishing in troubled waters, while the united force of the two Powers might be sufficient to prevent the threatened explosion².

The course of the negotiations showed how wellfounded Castlereagh's fears were. Austria's Memorandum was far from conciliatory. There was an open quarrel between Hardenberg and Metternich, in which all their private correspondence concerning Poland was betrayed to the Tsar. Alexander himself, after vainly attempting to obtain Metternich's dismissal, showed some signs of willingness to compromise, and offered the Tarnopol district to Austria; but there appeared to be no possibility of agreement on the Saxon point.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet had been growing more and more alarmed. On November 25th an attack had been made by the Opposition in the House of Commons, pressing for information on the rumours of dissensions concerning Naples, Saxony and Poland, to which Ministers found the greatest difficulty in returning an effective reply. A meeting of the Cabinet was held and an official Instruction was sent to Castlereagh—the only important one received by him during the whole course of the Congress—which, while approving of his attitude as regards Poland, expressed the greatest alarm at the general state of Europe, and concluded: "It is unnecessary for me to point out to you the impossibility of His Royal Highness consenting to involve this country in hostilities at this time for any of the objects which have hitherto been

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, December 7th, 1814. F.O. Continent. 8; *British Diplomacy*, p. 255.

² Castlereagh to Liverpool, December 5th, 1814. Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, ix. 463.

under discussion at Vienna¹." How little attention Castlereagh was to pay to this communication will be seen. The Cabinet, on receipt of his despatches of December 5th and 7th, moved further in his direction. Liverpool agreed that an Alliance with France was desirable, and that, to obtain it, some concession to her on the question of Murat was expedient. Any settlement of Poland, Germany and Italy was, he said, to be preferred to war, of which, however, he admitted Great Britain could not indefinitely remain a mere spectator. He renewed, at the same time, his warning against committing this country to hostilities, and intimated that the Cabinet could not sanction such a course, until they were in possession of all the circumstances of the rupture². But these warnings had little effect on the negotiations at Vienna. Castlereagh had made up his mind as to the course to be taken, and, during three weeks of ever-increasing strain, he persisted steadily in a line of action which, if it had not been successful in its object, must have resulted in an immediate outbreak of hostilities. The boldness of his action was justified by the result: peace was preserved, and it is difficult to see how it could have been preserved in any other way. But no Foreign Minister has ever taken upon himself a greater responsibility than Castlereagh assumed in the negotiations at Vienna, and, however his action may be criticised in its final results, due recognition must always be given to the courage and energy with which he acted at this all-important moment in the history of Europe.

He had, first, to make sure of Talleyrand; and this task proved far less difficult than might have been expected. Talleyrand had been successful in preventing the formal opening of the Congress; but, until the Powers came to almost open rupture, he had exercised little influence on their discussions. As a result of the interview in Paris, his relations with Castlereagh had been closer than with the other Ministers. His insistence on the interests of Saxony, rather than of Poland, had indeed, caused some discontent; but Castlereagh's influence had held back any direct step on his part, and through Wellington he had impressed his views on the French Court. At one time, there had been a suspicion that Talleyrand might make a bargain with Alexander; but his Instructions and the wishes of Lewis XVIII really left him no alternative. When, therefore, Castlereagh, and subsequently Metternich, began to make overtures to him, he showed every

¹ Bathurst to Castlereagh, November 27th, 1814. F.O. Continent. 6; *British Diplomacy*, p. 247.

² Liverpool to Castlereagh, December 23rd, 1814. Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, ix. 497.

disposition to meet them. Castlereagh throughout treated him with regard, though he never gave him his full confidence until the moment of crisis came. Through Castlereagh's influence, the issue of the French Note on Saxony was postponed until the first plan had been shown to be impossible, and, when the Prussian demands grew more menacing, Castlereagh, as has been seen, began to look forward to a French Alliance. Talleyrand's only condition was the expulsion of Murat, which Lewis XVIII regarded as of equal importance to the preservation of the King of Saxony. As will be seen, Castlereagh had himself long desired the same end, if it could be obtained without an actual breach of faith. Though he could not give Talleyrand definite assurances on this point, he put forward a plan by which Murat was to be offered a pecuniary indemnity as a preliminary to his expulsion, and urged Talleyrand to have the French archives searched for proofs of Murat's treachery in 1814, so that public opinion in England and Europe might be satisfied. With these assurances, though Metternich was far less explicit, Talleyrand was content, and pressed eagerly for a treaty, from which, however, Castlereagh held back until the very last minute. For, though he desired the French Alliance, if a rupture seemed inevitable, he was anxious not to force it prematurely, lest it should give an excuse for the outbreak which it was meant to prevent¹.

In the latter half of December, Castlereagh made a final effort to settle the matters in dispute. The Three Powers all pressed him to accept the office of Mediator, and with this end in view he consented to fresh interviews with the Prussians. They now brought forward a new plan by which the King of Saxony was to receive, as compensation for his kingdom, a large part of the left bank of the Rhine; but Castlereagh peremptorily refused to have anything to do with this scheme. Such a State would, he thought, fall entirely under the influence of France, and the safety of the Netherlands would be compromised. It was now impossible, he said, for Prussia to obtain the whole of Saxony. She must look for compensation elsewhere; and, in order that the whole matter might be discussed without the constant disputes as to the figures of population of the various territories concerned, he proposed that a Statistical Commission should be set up, composed of representatives of the Four Powers, to ascertain from the best information at hand the numbers of "souls" which the

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, December 18th, 1814. Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, IX. 435.

Powers had severally at their disposal. Though Prussia as yet showed no signs of compromise on the Saxon Question, she assented to this proposition, and the Committee, which proved of great service in settling the disputed points, was set up on December 24th. It contained a French representative, for Talleyrand had threatened to leave the Congress, if admission were refused him. Castlereagh, therefore, though he had not intended to expose his hand so soon, pressed for his inclusion, and Prussia and Russia gave way. On December 25th he went further, and in a letter to Talleyrand assured him, though in vague terms, that British policy, with regard not only to Saxony, but also to Naples, was aiming at the same ends as that of France¹.

The final crisis was now at hand. The Tsar, now that he felt assured of obtaining almost all his Polish demands, was anxious for peace. But Hardenberg, urged on by the Prussian military leaders, refused all compromise, and Metternich, who was supported by almost all the small States, showed himself equally unyielding. Matters were brought to a head by the Tsar's demand for a formal Conference to settle the Polish question. When this met, on December 29th, it was inevitable that Saxony must be discussed as well as Poland. Castlereagh and Metternich, therefore, refused all formal discussion until a French Plenipotentiary should have been admitted. Hardenberg vehemently objected, for such a course, in view of Talleyrand's zeal for Saxony, was equivalent to accepting defeat. The Prussians endeavoured to carry their point by a show of force before it was too late, and Hardenberg, in unguarded words, threatened war, unless the Prussian claims on Saxony were immediately recognised. His language rid Castlereagh of his last hesitations, and he went straight from the Conference to Talleyrand and Metternich, with the project of a Secret Treaty, which he had himself drafted. The Treaty was an application of the provisions of Chaumont to the new situation. France, Austria and Great Britain were each to contribute 150,000 men, if attacked by Prussia. Bavaria, Hanover and the Netherlands were to be asked to accede so soon as it was signed. Metternich, of course, accepted it, while Talleyrand was no less ready, and made no objection to a Clause which bound France to respect in any event the stipulations of the Treaty of Paris. He was content that "the Coalition was dissolved," and the French redaction which he drew up at Castlereagh's request only made one or two insignificant alterations

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, December 18th, December 24th, 1914. F.O. Continent. 9; *British Diplomacy*, pp. 260, 268.

in the original draft. Even in the matter of Saxon, accommodating, for Castlereagh informed both him and before they signed, that he did not intend to re-increase of territory in that quarter¹.

The Treaty meant war, if Prussia persisted in following Castlereagh's decision, which was made in direct Instructions of his Cabinet, was, therefore, of the moment. But, as he told Liverpool, Great Britain drawn into the war in any case, and it was far better with such a Treaty than to let events take their course. In guarding the Treaty of Paris, British interests in France were protected and no temptation was offered to France to conquests. The decision was at once accepted by the Cabinet as Castlereagh had anticipated. In fact, before information arrived, Liverpool had already indicated, in a letter of the 10th, that the Cabinet were prepared for the French Ambassador's despatch had not reached Castlereagh when he signed the Treaty. It is not clear whether or not it can be said that the news of the signature of the Treaty with the United States, which reached him on January 1st, was a deciding factor in the decision. It had been leading up to such an event. The occasion was the threats of Prussia, which gave sufficient excuse. Castlereagh perceived that the psychological moment had come when France must be fought over Saxony, and the Treaty was a precautionary measure and was justified by its success.

In a few days, however, all danger of war was over. The first and third meetings of "the Four," Metternich and Castlereagh, boldened by their Treaty, persisted in their demand for the cession of France, and Hardenberg, after a vain struggle, yielded. An attempt was made by the Prussians to press the scheme of ceding the King of Saxony by a territory on the left bank of the Rhine. Castlereagh countered this by a special interview with Razumovsky, the Russian representative, which was followed by one with Metternich himself. There could be no question of Austria's desire for Saxony. He had heard something of this, and he had challenged Castlereagh pointblank on the subject. He had received information that he had left him in no doubt.

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 10th Dec. 1814, *Diary*.

² See

with great alacrity in accepting the scheme for the reconstruction of Saxony which Castlereagh had drawn up¹.

When the Council of Five met on January 10th, the main question of the Saxon question had already been decided. Prussia knew that she must give way, and it only remained to settle how much of Saxony was to be given her, and how her other losses in Poland were to be compensated. But the settlement occupied another five weeks of discussions, before it was finally concluded. In these discussions Castlereagh throughout acted as a real Mediator, and fully carried out his promise to Hardenberg, that he intended to make a powerful Prussia. From the first, he had great difficulties

to contend with his Allies. Both Metternich and Talleyrand were anxious to secure their victory to the utmost, and to exclude Prussia from any considerable portion of Saxony. In these circumstances, Castlereagh had himself to take the initiative and to force concessions on the Allies' behalf, speaking to the Emperor Francis in person, when he confessed himself unable to cope with the demands of the Prussian military party. He did not, indeed, obtain anything to satisfy the pretensions of the Prussians, who insisted on the retention of Leipzig. A complete deadlock arose between the French and the Prussians, which threatened to wreck the negotiations completely. After a long and painful interview with Hardenberg and the King of Prussia, Castlereagh was unable to bring them to accept the last offer. It was only by inducing Alexander to cede the fortress of Glogau to Prussia that he was at last able to wring a reluctant consent from Hardenberg to relinquishing Leipzig. Finally, after repeated discussions with the Ministers and their Sovereigns, he secured a settlement to which all parties consented².

With the Silesian rearrangement, the whole German and Polish settlement was concluded; and, except on one or two minor points, all the affairs of Europe north of the Alps were thus settled before Castlereagh left Vienna. In order to satisfy the Allies and to obtain territory for the purpose of Prussian reconstruction, he cut down to the lowest possible limit the claims of the Netherlands and Hanover. As a last resort, both these States depended on Great Britain's goodwill, and Castlereagh was able to use his influence with them for

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, January 8th, 1815. F.O. Documents, 10; *British Diplomacy*, p. 283.

² Castlereagh to Liverpool, January 11th, 22nd, 29th, 1815. F.O. Documents, 11; *British Diplomacy*, pp. 287, 292, 294.

the advantage of the general settlement. The final result satisfied his expectations, so far as the centre of Europe was concerned. The Prince of Orange, now King of the Netherlands, was master of what was thought to be a solid and compact State, and Luxemburg was also under his sovereignty, though it remained part of the German Confederation. Prussia received the left bank of the Rhine and was thus at hand to protect the Netherlands, as Pitt had planned in 1805. Hanover, strengthened by the absorption of East Frisia in its territory, reached the mouth of the Ems, and thus, as Castlereagh hoped, a solid *bloc* was made on the north-eastern frontier of France, where she had always gained such signal successes. Prussia received nearly two-fifths of Saxony in which Castlereagh had insisted on including, much to Austria's annoyance, the Elbe fortresses of Torgau and Erfurt. Even more important, however, than the actual details of the Saxon compromise was that it again made possible good relations between Austria and Prussia, and prepared the way for a renewal of the negotiations on the subject of a German Confederation, to which, as a means to solidify and strengthen central Europe, Castlereagh attached the highest importance.

In the Polish matter, Castlereagh had to be content with such concessions as Alexander would grant. Almost the whole of the duchy of Warsaw remained in Russian hands, and out of this Alexander created a separate kingdom of Poland. The cession of Thorn to Prussia and the establishment of Cracow as a Free Town implied a certain concession to the Central Powers, but the whole result was regarded as a menace to their peace. Before the settlement was completed, Castlereagh made a special declaration of the wish of Great Britain for an independent Poland, had such a result been possible. In this he was quite consistent, for he had at the outset of the negotiations declared himself in the same sense. But, as has been seen, he had never intended it seriously, and the declaration now made was merely to satisfy public opinion in England, which had throughout consistently advocated Polish independence, and had even accused Castlereagh of thwarting Alexander's good intentions on the subject. In this point, he only anticipated the wishes of his Cabinet, for Liverpool wrote specially a few days later to urge its importance¹. More sincere, perhaps, were his solemn injunctions to the three Eastern Powers to grant the Poles special privileges.

¹ Liverpool to Castlereagh, January 16th, 1815. *Wellington, Supplementary Despatches*, ix. 539.

"Experience has proved," wrote Castlereagh, "that it is not by counteracting all their habits and usages as a people, that either the happiness of the Poles or the peace of that important portion of Europe can be preserved. A fruitless attempt so long persevered in by institutions foreign to their manners and sentiments, to make them forget their existence and even language as a people, has been sufficiently tried and failed. It has only tended to excite a sentiment of discontent and self-degradation, and can never operate otherwise than to provoke commotion and to awaken them to a recollection of past misfortunes.

"The Undersigned, for these reasons, and in cordial concurrence with the suggestions which have been thrown out, and which appear to have been favourably received by the respective Cabinets in the course of the present Conferences, ardently desires that the illustrious Monarchs, to whom the destinies of the Polish nation are confided, may be induced, before they depart from Vienna, to take an engagement with each other, to treat as Poles, under whatever form of political institution they may think fit to govern them, the portion of that nation that may be placed under their respective sovereignties¹."

It may be doubted if Castlereagh, who had from the first aimed at a partition of the duchy of Warsaw between the Three Powers, had any right to make such a protest, at any rate to Alexander, who, among all the statesmen at Vienna, was alone really desirous of making any concession to Polish nationality. But the Tsar did not resent it, and, as a result of it, the Treaty of Vienna contained a guarantee to the Poles of a separate administration and institutions which at least served as a legal basis for the protests which were to be made on their behalf by Great Britain and France during the nineteenth century².

The main territorial settlement north of the Alps had thus been settled before Castlereagh left Vienna. Such was, however, not the case with Italy, where some problems had been postponed until the great dispute was settled. Nevertheless, Italian Questions, and particularly the position of Murat, played a by no means inconsiderable part in the diplomacy that led to the Treaty of January 3rd; and, throughout, the Powers were fully aware that this difficulty had to be dealt with before the peace of Europe could be assured. Metternich had succeeded in preventing any formal discussion on Italian problems, except that of Genoa, which was already decided by the Peace of Paris, until he should have settled matters with the Tsar. He had naturally no wish to raise difficulties in Italy which would weaken

¹ *British and Foreign State Papers*, II. 642.

² The Poles approached Wellington after Castlereagh's departure for further action in their favour, which he declined to take. Wellington to Castlereagh, February 18th, 25th, 1815. Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, IX. 571, 579.

his position in his negotiations concerning Poland and Saxony. Thus, neither Talleyrand nor Labrador was able to open formally the Question of Naples during the period of crisis. It was, however, often referred to in the negotiations, and Alexander no less than Metternich and Castlereagh endeavoured to use it as a means to influence Talleyrand's policy, which was, however, as has been seen, determined by other considerations. Nevertheless, Talleyrand had to be satisfied on the head of Naples, and, before the final crisis, he had received assurances, from Castlereagh at least, that the Bourbon claim to overthrow Murat would be met in some way or other. The means by which this promise was carried out led to one of the most obscure and intricate diplomatic incidents of the period¹. None of the parties to the discussion dare act openly, and the exact processes by which the final result was brought about are still to some extent unknown.

As has been seen, Castlereagh, in spite of his acquiescence in the Treaty between Austria and Murat, had attempted to keep his hands free. Of his personal desire to restore the Bourbons there can be no doubt, though he in no way committed himself towards the Duke of Orleans before he set out for Vienna. From the first, he showed himself cold and reserved towards Murat's able representatives at Vienna, the Duc de Campochiaro and Prince Cariati. These Envoys, from the opening of the Congress onwards, never ceased to press for the formal recognition of Murat, which, they claimed, had been promised at the time of the Armistice. Castlereagh eluded all these attempts, and gradually felt his way towards a solution. The task was not an easy one. Unless Murat could be shown to have broken his engagements, Great Britain, if not so deeply committed as Austria, had yet virtually agreed to his retention of his kingdom. It remained to be seen whether a way could be found to break this agreement without too open a breach of faith. Castlereagh and Metternich proved equal to the problem, but they were immensely assisted by Murat's own lack of judgment and control, while the return of Napoleon made the final *dénouement* very different from what had been anticipated, and obscured the fact that Murat's deposition had already been decided when Castlereagh left Vienna. The first act of Campochiaro was to present to Castlereagh and other statesmen a *Mémoire Historique*, defending Murat's conduct during the period between the

¹ The most complete account is given in Commandant M. H. Weil's *Joseph Murat (1799-1810)* which is based on extensive researches in Italian, Austrian, French and British archives, and furnishes an immense collection of documents.

Battle of Leipzig and the conclusion of the First Peace of Paris. Murat had become alarmed, and justly so, at the hostility displayed against him in so many quarters. France and Spain were openly and fiercely supporting the claims which Ferdinand IV had never abandoned. The Papacy, though under the distinguished influence of Consalvi, it was, at this time, by no means disposed to acquiesce in Austrian domination of the peninsula, yet was disputing with Murat the control of the Marches and refused him recognition. From the Northern Powers he could expect nothing. He had therefore to rely on his Treaty with Austria and the self-commitments of Great Britain. The support of this latter Power was, indeed, most vital of all, for she still virtually controlled Sicily, which her troops still occupied and her subsidies furnished with revenue, while her sea power prevented such an attack as France and Spain might be disposed to contemplate. The *Mémoire Historique* was intended to force Castlereagh's hand. It merely, however, gave an opportunity to Bentinck and Nugent, the Austrian General, to whom it was referred for observations when the right moment came, to repeat all their accusations against Murat, and left matters exactly as they were. In his interviews with Campochiaro, Castlereagh replied coldly and cautiously to all attempts to ascertain his views. He told the Envoy, frankly, that he considered the Question an open one while at the same time he tried to prevent Murat from taking any action by pointing out that the Armistice could only be denounced with three months' notice. Meanwhile, he asked A'Court to find out how far the Bourbons could look for support in Naples itself¹.

The death of Maria Carolina, Bentinck's constant foe, on September 7th, removed one possible obstacle to a Bourbon Restoration, which events at Vienna made more and more necessary, and Murat's relations with the Tory Government were not made easier by the visit of the Princess of Wales to Naples and her openly expressed admiration for the King, while such English friends as Lord Oxford, who was arrested at Paris when on a secret mission from Murat, did him more harm than good.

Meanwhile, at Vienna, Talleyrand and Labrador had been pressing not only the dethronement of Murat, but also the restoration to the Spanish Bourbons of the Parma duchies, assigned to Marie-Louise and her son by the Treaty of Fontainebleau. These overtures had no immediate result, and it was only the incorporation of Genoa in Piedmont which was formally agreed to at this time. This cession

¹ Castlereagh to A'Court, October 2nd, 1814. *Castlereagh Correspondence*, x. 145.

provoked considerable criticism in the British Parliament; for the Whigs, instructed by Bentinck, seized on this point as a means of embarrassing the Ministry. Nor was it long before the attention of the Opposition was turned to Naples. They were well informed by Murat's agents of the actual situation and, in a debate on November 25th, Castlereagh was accused of bad faith by Whitbread and Horner. These attacks had, however, little influence on Castlereagh, though they may have contributed to Murat's fall by making him imagine that his cause had powerful supporters in England. On the contrary, as the dispute over Saxony grew hotter, Castlereagh drew closer to Talleyrand, and this necessarily meant some agreement on the Neapolitan Question. He was, perhaps, influenced to some extent by Wellington's opinion, freely communicated from Paris, that the Peace of Europe could not be considered secure while Murat was on the Throne of Naples. Gradually, therefore, Castlereagh came to a decision; and when, on December 13th, Talleyrand in a formal Note proposed that all the Powers should recognise Ferdinand as King of Naples and that Murat should be deposed by a maritime expedition, so as to avoid the sending of French troops through Italy, he promised to seek Instructions from London. This he did in a long letter to Liverpool on December 18th, in which he went further than he had indicated to Talleyrand¹. It was clear, he wrote, that Murat had not fulfilled his engagements, and that, therefore, Great Britain was free to act in favour of the Sicilian Bourbons. He proposed, accordingly, that a definite offer should be made of a pecuniary compensation to Murat himself and his heirs, together with a solemn guarantee to the Neapolitans of an amnesty and "such rights and privileges . . . as may be just and reasonable." If Murat refused this offer, then the future course must be decided according to events; but it was obvious that Castlereagh did not anticipate much difficulty in overthrowing him by force, and that Austria would not offer much objection. Metternich had, indeed, as yet not committed himself; but, so early as the middle of November, direct negotiations had been opened between him and Blacas at Paris without the knowledge of Talleyrand, which were to play an important part in the solution of the whole question. By the end of December, these had developed into a proposition to settle the Neapolitan question at Paris, and, by the middle of January, these *pour-parlers* had carried the matter considerably further. Meanwhile, how-

Castlereagh to Liverpool, December 18th, 1814. Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, ix. 485.

ever, Castlereagh's letter, backed by the strong support of Wellington¹, who made out the military problem to be one easily solved, had won over Liverpool. In a letter of January 11th, the Prime-Minister agreed to Castlereagh's scheme, provided Great Britain took no active part, and Castlereagh was therefore able to give Talleyrand a definite promise that action would be taken against Murat, and thus win his French colleague's consent to all the compromises necessary to settle the German Questions².

The final stages by which the deposition was to be carried out were, however, arranged between Castlereagh and Metternich without Talleyrand's knowledge. Metternich appears to have made up his mind by the middle of January, that Murat must be abandoned. He wished, however, to ensure that Bourbon influence should not disturb the Habsburg control of Italy, and he accordingly determined to make his consent depend on the French acceptance of Austrian plans for the centre of the peninsula, and in particular of the establishment of Marie-Louise and her son in the Parma duchies, in accordance with the Treaty of Fontainebleau. He took Castlereagh fully into his confidence, and a project was drawn up for the final settlement of Italy, which Castlereagh was to present at Paris on his way home from the Congress. In this paper the whole outline of the proposed settlement was sketched out and the hope was expressed that, in return for the overthrow of Murat, Lewis XVIII would agree to all the rest. Castlereagh made some reservations of his own as to this plan, especially as regards the Duchies, but in substance he was prepared to back Metternich. At Paris on February 27th he had a long interview with Lewis XVIII, followed by one with Vincent, Metternich's Envoy, and when he left on March 1st he had won Lewis' consent to the whole scheme, except the succession in the Duchies of the young Napoleon, a change which Castlereagh himself had recommended as desirable³. At the same time, he took back with him to England a number of documents which Blacas, in response to requests from Vienna, had collected as proofs of Murat's "treachery"

¹ Sorel's observation (*L'Europe et la Révolution française*, VIII. 412) on Wellington "*qui poursuivait dans Murat le dernier lieutenant de Napoléon*," is altogether beside the mark. No one was less susceptible to such a motive. Wellington was, undoubtedly, genuinely convinced that Murat was a menace to the Peace of Europe.

² On January 18th, Murat addressed a letter to the Prince Regent, professing his devotion to Great Britain; but Liverpool merely referred Gallo to Vienna, where he knew the case would be already decided against Murat.

³ Castlereagh to Wellington, Paris, February 28th. Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, IX. 583.

in 1814. Meanwhile, at Vienna, Metternich had prepared the way for a rupture by responding to yet another demand for recognition on the part of Campochiaro in a Note which was almost an ultimatum; and the Austrian forces were steadily growing stronger in northern Italy. The stage was thus set for the final scene, when the whole situation was altered by the return of Napoleon from Elba.

For the moment the return of Napoleon made no difference to Castlereagh's policy. The fear of cooperation between Murat and Napoleon, and the reports that a correspondence existed between them, had indeed been one of the motives which induced Castlereagh to desire Murat's removal. The papers sent from Paris and the reports of Murat's recent conduct sent by Wellington from Vienna appear to have overcome all hesitation on the part of the Cabinet, and, on March 12th, an Instruction was sent to Wellington authorising him to enter into engagements for the removal of Murat from the Throne of Naples.

"As there will be some nicety," wrote Castlereagh, "in giving to our line on this question the form most likely to prove satisfactory to Parliament, it might be desirable that we should accede, according to our own form, to the Treaty previously agreed to by Austria and France, in the negotiation of which you will assist with a view of rendering the details as little objectionable as possible¹."

When this Instruction was sent, the full extent of Napoleon's success was not understood. But when it was seen that a new struggle had to be entered upon, the issue of which was doubtful, Castlereagh became less certain of the expediency of attacking Murat, who was indeed in no sense an ally of Napoleon's, and had offered to place his forces on the side of the Allies. The Chevalier Toco, Murat's representative in London, though he had no official character, presented a Memorandum to the British Government on the part of his master, which asserted in the strongest possible terms his desire to act with the Allies against Napoleon. In referring this communication to Vienna on March 24th, Castlereagh authorised Wellington to conclude a Treaty with Murat, so as to liberate the Austrian forces to fight against France². But in Italy events were moving too quickly towards a rupture for this Instruction to have any effect. Though, so late as March 23rd, Wellington had been doubtful whether it was expedient for

¹ Castlereagh to Wellington, March 12th, 1815. Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, ix. 592. Memorandum enclosed. F.O. Continent. Archives, 7.

² Castlereagh to Wellington, March 24th, 1815. Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, ix. 609.

Austria to attack, the hasty conduct of Murat, who, perhaps judiciously, in the end decided that his one chance for security lay in summoning all Italy to arms while the Allies were still occupied with Napoleon, brought matters to a head, and by the beginning of April he had virtually begun hostilities¹. Bentinck, who had returned to Genoa during the winter, was authorised by Wellington to attack Murat, if he moved against the Austrians, and Great Britain was thus at once brought into the War. In any case, it may be doubted whether the issue could long have been postponed; for Wellington assured Castlereagh that, if Murat had not been attacked, the plan for his deposition originally agreed upon would have been put into force before the Congress dispersed. When, therefore, Clancarty, who had been fully instructed by Wellington as to the plan of operations, on April 8th received Castlereagh's suggestion of March 24th, he took no action on it, and did not even communicate it to Metternich, allowing events to run their course². On April 10th, Austria, in spite of the continued protests of Campochiaro and Cariati, declared war. Though Bentinck again quarrelled with his Allies, the issue was not long in doubt, and before the orders for Bentinck's recall could be issued, Murat had been defeated and driven out of his kingdom.

Castlereagh had, of course, to defend his actions against vehement attacks in the House of Commons. Much of the correspondence of the spring had become public property, and the Opposition were able to support a charge of breach of faith with quotations from the documents which had passed between Castlereagh and Bentinck. But, in such circumstances, when only part of the facts are known, the position of a Minister of the Crown is a strong one. Castlereagh was able to make a convincing and effective reply which he supported by laying before the House numerous despatches to prove his case. These were carefully chosen, and included the documents supplied by Blacas as well as the comments of Bentinck and Nugent on the *Mémoire Historique*. Though Wellington admitted that Blacas' documents failed to convict Murat of a breach of faith, the evidence of Bentinck and Nugent did to a certain extent show him to have failed to carry out the promise on which the Treaty with Austria had been made, and in which Castlereagh had consented to recognise the Armistice. Castlereagh made skilful use of this evidence, while the

¹ Wellington to Burghersh, March 23rd, 1815. Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, IX. 604.

² Clancarty to Castlereagh, April 8th, 1815. F.O. Continent. 17; *British Diplomacy*, p. 321.

French documents were employed to prejudice Murat's character. Of the secret negotiations of January and February, no mention was, of course, made, and Castlereagh, though he mentioned Murat's offer transmitted by Chevalier Toco, carefully concealed the fact that he had been quite ready to accede to it at the time¹. The case against the Government, therefore, completely collapsed; nor did Bentinck, though he protested hotly against his dismissal, care to raise Neapolitan matters at a later stage, for on the question of Murat he had gone even further than his Government. Murat's second expedition, which resulted in his capture and execution, finally disposed of the question of dynasty. Castlereagh was thus free to lend his support to all Metternich's measures for establishing Austrian control over Italy. In Sicily, thanks to Bentinck, Ferdinand was a Constitutional monarch, and Metternich was not prepared to risk Parliamentary institutions being set up in the peninsula itself. As the price of his restoration, Ferdinand signed, on June 12th, a Treaty with Austria, by which, in a Secret Article, he pledged himself not to allow a Constitution to be set up in Naples. The Treaty was communicated to A'Court, who, though he considered formal approval almost unnecessary since "the unfortunate experiment which has been made in Sicily has sufficiently disgusted His Majesty with innovations of every description," yet had no hesitation in saying that anything which contributed to consolidate the good understanding now prevailing between Austria and Naples could not but prove extremely satisfactory to the British Government². Castlereagh quite approved of this attitude; but of this dubious transaction, naturally, the Opposition knew nothing.

Castlereagh, before he left Vienna, had thus established, as he thought, a new arrangement of the European States which he hoped would safeguard the peace of Europe. He had, also, however, another expedient by which the Peace so hardly won might be specially preserved from attack. Immediately before his departure, he produced a scheme by which the new order of things was to be specially guaranteed by all the Powers of Europe. The idea of some special machinery for the preservation of peace was in the air. Castlereagh's scheme, however, undoubtedly dates back to the discussions between Pitt and Alexander in 1804 and 1805. In the letter to the Russian Ambassador, Pitt, after laying down the plan of the New Europe (a plan which

¹ Hansard, xxx. cols. 3-154, where the 19 documents placed before the House are printed.

² A'Court to Castlereagh, July 18th, 1815. F.O. Sicily, 70.

Castlereagh might now claim to have brought into being, almost to the smallest details), had dealt with Alexander's proposal to "form at the restoration of peace a general agreement and guarantee for the mutual protection and security of different Powers, and for reestablishing a general system of public law in Europe." On this point, Pitt (with, it will be remembered, Castlereagh's assistance), had replied:

It seems necessary at the period of a general pacification, to form a Treaty to which all the principal Powers of Europe should be parties, by which their respective rights and possessions, as they shall then have been established, shall be fixed and recognised. And they should all bind themselves mutually to protect and support each other, against any attempt to infringe them:—It should re-establish a general and comprehensive system of public law in Europe, and provide, as far as possible, for repressing future attempts to disturb the general tranquillity; and above all, for restraining any projects of aggrandizement and ambition similar to those which have produced all the calamities inflicted on Europe since the disastrous aera of the French Revolution.

It was this scheme which Castlereagh now endeavoured to put into operation¹. He was the more anxious to do so since he was being pressed by Alexander to renew the Quadruple Alliance, while Talleyrand and Metternich were hinting that further secret engagements on the model of that of January 3rd would be to their liking. Castlereagh, of course, considered the Treaty of Chaumont as one of the safeguards of the European Peace. But he was naturally not anxious at this moment to emphasise that Instrument, while he was also unwilling to increase his secret engagements with other Powers, now that the settlement had been peacefully arranged. Accordingly, he avoided these special engagements by producing a proposal that the Powers should publicly declare "their determination to uphold and support the arrangements agreed upon; and, further, their determination to unite their influence, and if necessary their arms, against the power that should attempt to disturb it." Alexander welcomed the idea with enthusiasm, and Gentz drew up a declaration which in elaborate and highflown language expressed Pitt's idea. It might, perhaps, have been signed immediately; but Castlereagh, going further than Pitt, wished to include the Turkish dominions among the territories thus guaranteed. Even to this proposal Alexander agreed, on condition

¹ *Castlereagh to Liverpool*, February 12th, 1815; *British Diplomacy*, p. 386. For the details see also C. H. WELLES, *The Congress of Vienna*, pp. 19 and 22, and also an article in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 3rd Series, vol. xl, November 19th, 1911.

that his disputes with the Porte should be first arranged. The Sultan, however, refused to take advantage of this offer, and, meanwhile, the return of Napoleon had caused the original scheme to be dropped. The project had thus no immediate result; but it marks the direction of Castlereagh's thoughts, while it was this scheme which suggested to Alexander the idea of the Holy Alliance.

After Castlereagh's departure, British influence at Vienna was never a determining factor in affairs. Though Wellington's prestige stood even now extraordinarily high, and he was treated with the greatest respect by the Congress, yet his energies were soon almost entirely absorbed in organising Europe to resist Napoleon. Moreover, almost all affairs of firstclass importance had been settled before Castlereagh left; so that neither Wellington nor Clancarty, who succeeded him, had more to do than fill in the details of the arrangements their predecessor had concluded. The disposal of Murat has been narrated above. In one other part of the Italian settlement, however, British diplomacy exerted considerable influence. The arrangement which Castlereagh concluded with Lewis XVIII as to the exclusion of the young Napoleon from the succession to the Parma duchies was never finally accepted by Metternich¹. The return of Napoleon reduced the French influence to a negligible quantity, and Metternich was not anxious to see another Bourbon family established in the peninsula. When therefore, Alexander, with his usual chivalry, pressed for the enforcement of the Treaty of Fontainebleau, even though Napoleon had freed the Powers from all obligations under it, Metternich refused to insist on the arrangement to which he had previously agreed. Had it not been for the vigorous opposition of Clancarty, who was now in charge, the young Napoleon would have been recognised as the heir to the duchies in the Vienna Final Act. The spirit in which Clancarty approached the subject is illustrated by a phrase in one of his private letters to Castlereagh: "Will you set a precedent of placing Bonaparte's bastard on the Throne?" His fierce opposition was sufficient to prevent any recognition of the young Napoleon's rights in the Treaty,

¹ Castlereagh himself, however, admitted, so late as April 12th, that he had been wrong in agreeing at his Paris interview that the young Napoleon should be excluded from the Succession. He pointed out that his rights under the Treaty of Fontainebleau were explicitly guarded, and Marie-Louise had no power to deprive him of them. If they were taken away, therefore, it must be on the plea that Napoleon's return had abrogated the Treaty of Fontainebleau. If Napoleon had remained at Elba, his son would almost certainly have been recognised as heir to the Duchies. *Castlereagh Correspondence*, x. 306.

² Clancarty to Castlereagh, May 19th, 1815. *Castlereagh Correspondence*, x. 335.

where the succession was left open. Unknown to him, however, a Secret Protocol was signed between Austria, Prussia and Russia recognising these claims, which was to cause Metternich much embarrassment when Castlereagh discovered it in 1817.

Another subject bound up in the fate of Italy was the settlement of the Ionian Islands. Castlereagh had been much exercised as to how to dispose of them in such a way as to exclude both French and Russian influence. At one time, they had been considered as a possible indemnity for Ferdinand IV; but, when he recovered Naples, Castlereagh recognised that Austria could not allow both sides of the Adriatic Gulf to be held by the same Power. He would himself have been ready to hand them over to Austria; but this was vetoed by Russia, Capodistrias taking a special interest in the fate of his native country, and having been entrusted by Alexander with all his authority on this question. It was eventually owing to him that Great Britain retained control of the Islands as Protector, by the Treaty concluded between the Four Powers at Paris on November 5th, 1815¹.

In other minor arrangements, the British influence was exerted almost always on the side of Austria. In these, as in the more important questions of the reconstruction of the German and Swiss Confederations, her diplomatists played only a subordinate part. From the first, Castlereagh had determined to have as little to do as possible with the details of the thorny and intricate problem of the new Constitution of Germany. He was, indeed, anxious that the German States should be combined in an effective Constitution, so that they should be able to hold their own against Russia and France. His own wishes would probably have led him to support Stein's proposals for a strong central government, with real control over the several States. He was especially anxious for the creation of a Federal army, and these ideas he supported in the period subsequent to the Congress. But he was aware of the difficulties of the situation, and does not appear to have attempted to exert any direct influence on the tortuous negotiations which eventually resulted in the eleven articles which formed part of the Final Act. In the Commission set up to consider this question, Great Britain was not directly represented and Münster was allowed an almost entirely free hand. While more "Austrian" than "Prussian," he was yet sufficiently moderate in

¹ *British and Foreign State Papers*, III. 250. The suggestion made by Bavaria that the islands should be given to Prince Eugène de Beauharnais in compensation for his claims under the Treaty of Fontainebleau was immediately rejected by Wellington. *Supplementary Despatches*, ix. 570.

his views to act as a mediator between rival parties, which was all that Castlereagh could desire. However, therefore, he may be blamed for supporting Metternich in later years in the equivocal proceedings which resulted in the Carlsbad Decrees and the Vienna Final Act, Castlereagh was in no way responsible for the halting solution reached at the Congress of Vienna itself.

As to the Swiss Confederation, he laid down for his subordinates a similar policy. Nevertheless, the young Stratford Canning, who assisted Lord Stewart in this matter, was too able and energetic a diplomatist to be content with a passive rôle, and he played a considerable part in the series of negotiations which eventually adapted the Constitution of 1803 to the altered circumstances of the time, and finally succeeded in composing the differences among both the Swiss and the Allies. He was, for example, not satisfied with Capodistrias' drafting of the Protocols, and was tactfully allowed to draw them up himself. He supported the policy of allowing the wishes of the Diet to prevail, and successfully opposed Capodistrias' rather sweeping proposals. He, also, tried to save the Valtelline from Austria without success. None of the Powers seem to have understood the importance of their Declaration guaranteeing the neutrality of Switzerland, which was not finally executed until the Second Peace of Paris, and there is no sign that British statesmen took a special interest in this question. They were, indeed, more concerned in bringing Switzerland into the Coalition against Napoleon and inducing her to allow the Allied troops to move across her territory, than in arranging the details of the new policy, which was to form a precedent of great value, and prove of enormous advantage to Switzerland in the coming century.

The Abolition of the Slave-trade was made one of the principal questions of the Congress, solely through the agency of the British Ministers. They had indeed no alternative. On this Question, public opinion in England was stirred to the uttermost, and was, moreover, concentrated and organised so that it could exert its full force on the Legislature and the Executive. The Additional Article of the Treaty of Paris had by no means satisfied the recognised spokesmen of this subject in the country. The concession to France, that she might continue to bring slaves for five years to the Colonies, was considered a betrayal of the cause. It was in vain that Castlereagh pleaded that France must be treated as an independent nation, and that the cause would ultimately be better served by her agreement than by her submission. He was held to have thrown away a unique opportunity for

abolishing the detested traffic. "What could be done when your own Ambassador gave way?" Alexander asked Wilberforce, doubtless not unwilling to make things difficult for the Tories. But Wilberforce was himself a good Tory, and, though he would have sacrificed his party if any advantage could be secured for the cause, he saw clearly that it was useless to press the Ministry too far. The motion, therefore, which he moved on June 27th, in a speech that was a severe rebuke, was one which could be accepted by Castlereagh, whose defence was "that France could not be taught morality at the point of the bayonet." Motions by Grenville in the Upper House and Horner in the Commons calling for papers the Ministry were able to meet; but it was obvious that they had disappointed the country.

The efforts of the Government as well as those of the leaders of the agitation were immediately redoubled in view of the possibilities of the approaching Congress. Eight hundred petitions, containing nearly a million signatures, were presented to the House of Commons. Wilberforce prepared a mass of pamphlets, including an open letter to Talleyrand, in order to convert the Continental Sovereigns and statesmen. The Government, meanwhile, made the cause of Abolition a first charge in their endeavours. Orders were sent to Wellington at Paris and to Wellesley at Madrid to prepare the way for the efforts to be made at the Congress itself. In neither country, however, could much headway be made. All that Wellesley had been able to obtain in the Treaty of Alliance, signed on July 14th, was a promise by Spain to limit the traffic to ships of her own subjects. He was now authorised by Castlereagh to offer considerable subsidies, amounting to two million pounds, if Spain would limit the trade to the south of the line and promise to abolish it in five years, to which offer that of a loan on British credit for ten million dollars was added, if the Abolition was made immediate. But both these offers were rejected, and nothing had been accomplished by the time the Congress opened.

In France, the Abolitionists exerted their utmost efforts, and sent over Clarkson on a special mission. But French public opinion was vehement against concessions, and the support of the notorious Abbé Grégoire did not assist their cause. Extensive slaving expeditions were being prepared in French ports, and it was suggested that here, as in Spain, British capital was finding employment. Talleyrand, however, hinted to Lord Holland that France might grant immediate abolition in return for a Colony; and, on the conversation being reported, Wellington was permitted by Liverpool to sound the French

as to whether a money compensation would suffice, though both Ambassador and Prime-Minister were agreed as to the impolicy of barter. When Wilberforce and the Whigs heard of the proposal from Clarkson, they took it up so warmly as to render it obvious that some such offer must be made, if only to avoid disastrous criticism at home. By this time, however, the Congress had assembled, and the negotiation was, by Wellington's wish, transferred to Vienna. On October 8th, therefore, Castlereagh addressed an official Note to Talleyrand, making the definite offer to France of a West Indian island or a sum of money as compensation, if immediate Abolition were granted. This action was admittedly forced on the Government by fear of public opinion, and neither Liverpool, Wellington nor Castlereagh himself believed it to be a wise step. Castlereagh, indeed, considered that the whole agitation in England was doing more harm than good.

"The more I have occasion to observe the temper of foreign Powers on the question of Abolition," he wrote to Liverpool, "the more strongly impressed I am with the sense of prejudice that results, not only to the interests of the question itself but of our foreign relations generally, from the display of popular impatience which has been excited and is kept up in England on this subject. It is impossible to persuade foreign nations that this sentiment is unmingled with views of Colonial policy, and their Cabinets, who can better estimate the real and virtuous motives which guide us on this question, see in the very impatience of the nation a powerful instrument through which they expect to force at a convenient moment the British Government upon some favourite object of policy.

"I am conscious that we have done an act of indispensable duty, under the circumstances in which we have been placed, in making to the French and Spanish Governments the propositions we have done, but I am still more firmly persuaded that we should be at this moment in fact nearer our object, if the Government had been permitted to pursue this object with its ordinary means of influence and persuasion, instead of being expected to purchase concessions on this point almost at any sacrifice¹."

Talleyrand delayed his answer till November 5th, and when it came it was a refusal, as Castlereagh and Wellington had anticipated. Nevertheless, the Note was by no means uncompromising, partly, as Castlereagh thought, because the recovery of San Domingo by the French was now abandoned. In these circumstances, he avoided bringing the subject officially before the Congress, merely circulating documents and memoranda, and adding to the circulars of the Abolitionists others prepared by his own Office, which appealed to the

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, October 25th, 1814. F.O. Continent. 7; *British Diplomacy*, p. 215.

commercial and financial interests of the Powers concerned. Wellesley had, at last, induced the Spanish Government to offer to abolish the Trade in eight years, and immediately up to 10° on either side of the line; and the Portuguese Plenipotentiaries at Vienna were prepared to go rather further. It was Castlereagh's opinion, therefore, that, instead of concentration on attempts to obtain immediate Abolition, France should be induced to reduce her period to three years, after which coercive measures should be employed against Spain and Portugal by a refusal to admit their Colonial commerce to the markets of other countries, until the Trade was completely abolished. He, also, proposed to set up a permanent Commission in London and Paris to watch over the effectual execution of the regulations; for he was well aware, as events proved to be the case, how difficult in practice it would be to enforce worldwide Abolition. He hinted that exercise of the right of search and the treatment of offenders as pirates might be necessary to put a stop to the traffic—questions which were to occupy the attention of the British Government throughout the nineteenth century. These ideas were submitted to the Government in a special Memorandum on November 21st¹. Liverpool's reply, on December 9th², approved of the plan and urged that five years should be the extreme limit allowed to Spain and Portugal. By the beginning of December, however, when Castlereagh endeavoured to have the matter formally taken up, he was met with the determined opposition of these two Powers to the establishment of a special Commission of the Eight Powers for consideration of the subject, though Talleyrand, who was anxious at this time to win Castlereagh's favour for other reasons, supported him loyally. For the moment, therefore, Castlereagh dropped the formal negotiations, which the extreme tension then existing in the Congress made it difficult to pursue³. He succeeded, during the interval, by the offer of money and many other concessions, including the abrogation of some of the more onerous Clauses of the Treaty of Alliance between Portugal and Great Britain, in inducing the Portuguese Plenipotentiaries to sign a Treaty abolishing the traffic north of the line. Similar efforts with Spain were however of no avail.

At last, early in the new year, the formal consideration of the subject was again taken up. By personal interviews with the three Allied

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, November 21st. F.O. Continent. 8; *British Diplomacy*, p. 233.

² Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, ix. 469.

³ Castlereagh to Liverpool, December 18th, 1814. F.O. Continent. 9.

Sovereigns, Castlereagh procured the full support of their Ministers¹ for all his proposals, Alexander showing himself especially zealous. He knew, also, that Talleyrand would go as far as he dared. On January 16th, therefore, he was able to obtain the establishment of a "Conference" of the Eight Powers to consider the subject, which was distinguished in name only from a formal Commission. This Committee held four meetings between January 20th and February 8th, in which all Castlereagh's proposals were formally considered. He was able to confront the Spanish and Portuguese Plenipotentiaries with the united efforts of all the Great Powers, and to place the former in an exceedingly difficult position. Though Labrador and Palmella maintained a determined front, a record was thus obtained of the public feeling of all Governments which bore some immediate fruit, and certainly made easier the task of completing and making effective the work of Abolition in the succeeding years. A formal Declaration that the Slave-trade was against the laws of humanity was easily obtained, since it committed no Power to any express measure, and this Declaration subsequently became part of the Final Act signed in Vienna. An effort to induce Talleyrand to reduce the French term to three years having failed, as Castlereagh knew must be the case, he concentrated his efforts on obtaining Abolition north of the line and complete Abolition in five years. From Portugal, he obtained the former concession, and the latter from all the Powers except Portugal and Spain. Castlereagh then opened his plans for setting up special machinery in the form of Ambassadorial Conferences at London and Paris, to supervise the regulations as to Abolition. Spain and Portugal protested against this, wishing the Colonial Powers to be alone admitted; but Castlereagh refused to give way, since the whole essence of his plan lay in associating with Great Britain the Continental nations, who had no direct interests in the maintenance of the Trade, in order to put pressure on the other Maritime Powers. He, also, adumbrated plans for mutual right of search, and sketched his idea of excluding from the ports of all civilised nations the Colonial produce of any Power who refused to agree to complete Abolition after a lapse of time. This last proposition much alarmed Palmella, who placed a special protest on the Protocol, but Castlereagh was able to obtain a general approval of it².

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, January 1st, 1815; *British Diplomacy*, p. 274.

² It was turned against him, in 1817, by Alexander in the question of the Spanish Colonies.

On the whole, Castlereagh thought that Parliament and public opinion ought to be satisfied with the result of his efforts.

"I hope," he wrote on January 26th, "that essential progress has been made at least upon one branch of the question, I mean the liberation of the Northern parts of Africa from the miseries of this Trade; the foundation has also been laid for an entire cessation of the evil at a definite period, with the prospect that the auspicious epoch may be accelerated by future exertion; and what I consider of great importance is that the attention of the Ministers here has been awakened to this important subject in a degree much beyond what I could have hoped for, considering the multiplicity of their avocations and their former ignorance of the question¹."

The claim was justified. By obtaining a general Declaration against the Trade in the Treaty, by awakening public opinion among the statesmen by the discussions of the final Conference, and by initiating practical measures to ensure that Abolition, once obtained, should be faithfully carried out, Castlereagh had done an immense amount to bring this odious practice to an end. He was to add further services to the cause in the next two or three years. Nevertheless, in spite of his strictures on the vehement manifestations of public opinion in England, it is obvious that, without the unceasing efforts of Wilberforce and his friends, Castlereagh and his Government would have accomplished but little. Their goodwill cannot of course be doubted; but they needed a spur to make them sufficiently active when other matters were pressing on their attention. By forcing Ministers to initiate a policy of sacrifice, Wilberforce may sometimes have caused the Continental Powers to raise their price for acquiescence in a measure which their interests as well as their conscience should have forced them to adopt immediately. But, though a cynical construction was put upon the agitation by statesmen at the time and by many foreign historians since, it cannot be doubted that it was as sincere as it was ultimately effectual, and that, without the sustained and eager insistence of an organised public opinion in this country, the responsible statesmen would have allowed the iniquitous traffic to continue under the pretext that it was impossible to do otherwise.

Even as it was, the Government found it hard to convince the country that they had done all that was possible. Fortunately for the Ministry, the return of Napoleon, as will be seen, led to immediate Abolition by France, so that they were able thenceforth to concentrate their efforts on the Peninsular Powers.

With regard to another important Question at the Congress,

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, January 26th, 1815. F.O. Continent. 10.

Clancarty represented Great Britain on the Commission which was established to regulate International Rivers. Great Britain does not seem to have exerted much influence on these discussions, in which, naturally, the Continental Powers were much more nearly interested. This Commission was, however, used by Castlereagh to draw up the regulations on one question in which his country had a special interest—the destruction of the fortifications of Antwerp, which by the Treaty of Paris of 1814 it had been agreed to make a commercial port.

In the regulations drawn up by the Commission on the rank of diplomatic representatives Castlereagh took little interest, declaring that they would raise as many problems as they solved, though he acquiesced in the wishes of the majority. An attempt was made to raise the question of naval salutes at this Commission—a sly hit at some extravagant British pretensions—but the objections of the Admiralty prevailed and the matter was not formally considered.

IV. THE RETURN OF NAPOLEON AND THE SECOND PEACE OF PARIS

As has been seen above, Castlereagh was by no means satisfied with the Treaty of Fontainebleau, by which Napoleon was made Imperial Sovereign of Elba. But though he (and still more strongly, Lord Stewart) saw much reason for alarm in the establishment of Napoleon at Elba, yet he could, at the moment, suggest no other suitable destination for him, and consequently accepted the Treaty so far as the territorial arrangements for Napoleon and his family were concerned. Naturally, the surveillance of Napoleon was a considerable anxiety to the British Government during his stay on Elba. The British Commissary, Sir Neil Campbell, was provided with a naval force expressly for the supervision of the Emperor, and Lord Burghersh at Florence was specially ordered to supervise from Tuscany any attempts to enter into correspondence with him. But Napoleon was still a Sovereign Prince, and his actions could not be controlled, unless they amounted to an infringement of the Treaty; and though the archives of all the Powers are full of reports on his activities, nothing definite was known as to his designs. Metternich's secret police watched all the channels into Italy, and Talleyrand had his own spies. But, though some of the reports were alarmist, they came from discreditable sources. Castlereagh appears to have been chiefly disturbed by the possibility of collusion between Murat and Napoleon; but their intercourse was carried on through confidential agents, and there was no definite

proof of any plot. Thus, short of instituting a complete naval blockade of the Mediterranean, the British Government had no alternative but to trust to Campbell's watchfulness to prevent an escape.

There was, indeed, some talk at Vienna of removing Napoleon to a more remote and more easily guarded situation. The point is mentioned in one of the first papers laid by Prussia before the other three Allies¹. But such a plan was never seriously considered, and there can be no doubt that Alexander, and almost certainly Castlereagh and Metternich as well, would have vetoed any such proposition. Talleyrand was reduced to dally with designs for the kidnapping of Napoleon, and, as some think, even assassination was contemplated by the Bourbons, if no seriously planned scheme was ever set on foot. Lewis XVIII, however, refused to carry out the financial terms of the Treaty of Fontainebleau, by which two million francs were to have been paid to Napoleon. Castlereagh, more than once, warned Talleyrand of the danger of this infringement of the Treaty, and spoke strongly to Lewis XVIII about it on his passage through Paris. His words were not heeded; but Talleyrand may have remembered them when he was reduced to begging for money from Wellington, after his own supplies from Paris had been cut off by the return of the Emperor².

During his stay at Elba, Napoleon concealed with supreme skill his intention of returning, which he must have contemplated almost from the beginning of his exile. He professed, indeed, alarm at the rumours that he was to be deported to St Helena or elsewhere, as well as at the danger of an attack by Barbary pirates; he, also, complained bitterly of being deprived of his wife and son, and of the financial straits to which he was reduced. But Campbell, no less than all Napoleon's visitors, many of whom were English, was completely deceived by the resigned attitude which he affected. The resolution at which he arrived to take advantage of Campbell's absence in Tuscany for a few days appears to have been the result of intuition rather than of calculation, but it was welltimed so far as France was concerned. So easily was the escape made that for long it was widely believed in Europe to have been effected with the connivance of the British Government. Though Castlereagh generously took the responsibility, and demonstrated to the House of Commons the impossibility of blockading

¹ See *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 160.

² No credence should be attached to Talleyrand's assertion that Castlereagh listened with approval to a suggestion that Napoleon should be removed to the Azores.

effectively the island of Elba, it may be questioned whether Campbell was sufficiently alive to the risks of his position.

However, the mischief was done, and Europe was soon faced with the fact that France had accepted Napoleon's return almost without opposition. At Vienna, the first step taken was the memorable Declaration of March 13th, which delivered Napoleon to the vengeance of the nations. No mention was made in this document of supporting the Bourbons, for it was drawn up before the full extent of Napoleon's success was known. When the extent of the disaster was clear, there was but one voice among the Allies. The Treaty of Chaumont had been concluded expressly to guard against this danger. By March 25th, with hardly any alterations in the original text, the Four Powers had renewed their agreement, and six hundred thousand men were, on paper at least, in arms against France. Nor, so far as Napoleon was concerned, was this anything less than the expression of the Sovereigns' deep emotions and those of their peoples against the man who had so often triumphed over them. There was never at any time any sign of defection. When Napoleon found the Secret Treaty of January 3rd in his archives and sent it to Alexander, it told the latter little more than he already knew, and, though Castlereagh had a moment of anxiety, the revelation produced no effect. The Tsar indeed, aware of his own responsibility for the catastrophe, was almost too zealous, and it needed the blunt opposition of Wellington to make him understand that he could not be the generalissimo of the new Coalition¹. Wellington himself approached nearer to that rôle, and with the Allied military authorities at Vienna produced a plan of campaign which would ultimately bring a million soldiers into the field against the French. At the end of March, he set out for Brussels to take command of the army which England was assembling in the Netherlands, of which, however, only 30,000 were British troops.

But, though united against Napoleon, the Powers were no more agreed as to who should take his place than they had been in 1814. Metternich's intrigues with Fouché were doubtless, as he said, a mere *ruse de guerre*. But his attitude was at least doubtful, while Alexander spoke even more bitterly against the Bourbons than he had in 1814; for they had now added to their other faults ingratitude to himself. Talleyrand himself kept a free hand so far as possible, and refused to leave Vienna for the King's Court at Ghent. Indeed, at Vienna

¹ Wellington to Castlereagh, March 12th, 1815. F.O. Continent. 14; *British Diplomacy*, p. 312.

Clancarty was by far the best friend of the Bourbons, and, when it was proposed to issue another Declaration, now that Napoleon had assumed the Crown once more, it was his insistence that obtained the insertion in it of some words of a friendly nature towards Lewis XVIII, while, in a long interview with Alexander, he discouraged the Tsar's predilections for Orleans or even a Republic¹. So difficult was it to obtain agreement on the question at Vienna, that the Declaration originally drawn up on April 11th, was not formally inserted on the Protocol until May 12th.

Meanwhile, though the British Government were entirely at one with the Allies as regards Napoleon, there was a period of uncertainty before the War with France became irrevocable. Nearly all the "Mountain" and many of the Whigs were against the War, and almost until the outbreak of hostilities in Belgium protested against it. Castlereagh had to defend against hot attacks in the Commons not only the Vienna Settlement, so far as it was already known, but also the policy of the Allied Powers with regard to the Treaty of Fontainebleau. In the Lords, Wellesley as well as Grey protested against the War, though the Grenville party held coldly aloof. In these circumstances, the Ministry, though determined on war, in which they were supported by the mass of the nation, could do nothing openly for the Bourbons. Their sentiments were, indeed, unanimous in desiring Lewis' return, and throughout they were faithful to the confession which Liverpool had made on February 20th, "The keystone of all my external policy is the preservation of the Bourbons on the Throne²." But, though on March 12th, when the news of Napoleon's flight first reached him, Castlereagh wrote to Wellington urging the Powers to support Lewis XVIII, by the 14th he had to supplement this despatch by another urging caution. "We can often do more than we can say³," he wrote; and this sums up the policy of his Government. Thus, though the Declaration of the 13th was defended against the attacks of the Opposition, who described it as an incentive to assassination, the Treaty of March 25th was only accepted subject to a declaration that it was not intended to impose any particular dynasty on France, and Clancarty was cautioned against committing his Government in any way to the cause of the Bourbons.

¹ Clancarty to Castlereagh, April 15th, 1815. F.O. *Outgoing*, 17; *British Diplomacy*, p. 325.

² Liverpool to Castlereagh, February 20th, 1815. Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, II, 573.

³ Castlereagh to Wellington, March 12th, 14th, 16th. Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, II, 552, 555, 557.

And, though Napoleon's letter to the Prince Regent was returned unopened, the Address moved in the House of Commons on April 17th¹, while urging preparation for war and concert with the Allies, did not, as Castlereagh expressly allowed, mean immediate war. But the temper of the nation gradually showed that Ministers had the whole country behind them. Whitbread could only muster 37 votes against 220 for his amendment to the Address, and of the London Press only *The Morning Chronicle* supported a peace policy. Napoleon's bid for British public opinion by decreeing the complete Abolition of the Slave-trade produced no effect. When the Treaty of March 25th became known and had to be avowed, another furious attack was made by the Opposition, who taunted Castlereagh with the futility of the Treaty of Fontainebleau, as well as with the bad faith shown in carrying it out. But this attack was almost as easily repulsed as the other, though the wisdom of the British reservation was made clear. Meanwhile, the blockade had been established and French merchantmen seized; preparations were made to foment insurrection in the Vendée, and the army was being rapidly organised in Belgium. The Duke of Wellington was entrusted with the task of making Subsidy Treaties with the smaller Powers, so that Great Britain could supply her quota as laid down by the Treaty, and through his agency gradually all the petty States were summoned to join in the fray. Sir Charles Stuart was instructed to represent the British Government at the stately, if penurious, Court which Lewis kept up at Ghent, where also all the other Great Powers were represented. Money, munitions and clothing were sent to the King.

After Waterloo, the Duke became the arbiter of the destinies of France. Blücher was no politician, and was too fully occupied with revenge and spoliation to play any important part in the series of events that ensued on Napoleon's abdication in favour of his son. Lewis was, therefore, able to take Wellington's advice and follow closely the victorious Allied armies, and all northern France declared for him before Paris fell. It scarcely needed, therefore, the dexterous intrigues of Fouché to smooth the way for the Second Restoration, which was accomplished before the Sovereigns and their Ministers had time to intervene, even if they had wished. Alexander had thus, for a second time, to accept the despised Bourbons, and soon accommodated himself to the position. So swiftly and easily did all this

¹ A very accurate summary of the Debate is given in *The Dynasts*, Part III. Act v, Scene v.

take place, that the wish of the British Government was accomplished without either Castlereagh or Wellington being compromised.

Napoleon fled to the coast; but British ships prevented the accomplishment of his plan of escaping to America. Had he succeeded, Alexander wished the Allies to address a Note to the President to surrender him; but Castlereagh himself had no expectation that much advantage would be derived from such a measure. However, Napoleon had really no alternative but to surrender to Captain Maitland, and, in any case, he could not, and probably did not, expect much mercy, in spite of his famous appeal to the generosity of the British nation. Wellington protested against Blücher's resolve to shoot Napoleon if he caught him; but our Ministers would have welcomed such an escape from an intolerable responsibility. The Allies were only too ready to leave to the British the ignominy of guarding the Emperor, though, since Castlereagh from the first insisted on it against the wishes of the Cabinet, they, by means of Commissaries at St Helena, shared the responsibility of his detention. Castlereagh, who, while still ignorant of Napoleon's surrender, had lamented that the King of France had not the will or the power to execute him as a traitor, wrote to Liverpool on hearing of his capture, "After fighting him for 20 years, as a trophy he seems to belong to us¹." Since measures were soon on foot by his friends in England to use the machinery of English law to embarrass the Government, he was quickly hurried off to St Helena—a captive, and denied, now as ever, by the British Government the Imperial title and the attributes of royalty.

Their Emperor captive and the Bourbons restored, the French nation had now to be dealt with. So early as March 26th, Castlereagh had written to Wellington that though "France must pay the price of her own deliverance," yet it was imperative that war should not degenerate into "an indiscriminate and destructive pillage," as it had in 1814². Wellington himself was most anxious to avoid measures which, in the previous campaign, had impaired the efficiency of every army but his own and rallied the French nation against the invaders. Accordingly he arranged with Lewis XVIII that Commissaries should be appointed to accompany the Allied armies to regulate their relations with the inhabitants and arrange for their subsistence. But,

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, July 17th, 1815. F.O. Continent. 21; *British Diplomacy*, p. 350.

² Castlereagh to Wellington, March 26th, 1815. Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, IX. 623. See also Sir Charles Stuart's Despatches in Malet's *Louis XVIII à Gand*, vol. II.

that the Allies were entitled to exact an indemnity from France, and he was concerned to establish some means of security for the immediate future. But, from the first, he saw clearly the folly of depriving France of the conquests of the eighteenth century, and of placing her in such a situation as to make her despair of her future. For six weeks, supported only by Alexander, he fought a hard battle with his Cabinet and the Allies, till, in the end, his commonsense and irresistible logic triumphed, and the terms actually offered to France were almost exactly what he had proposed in the first instance. Nor, in the concessions finally made to the French when Richelieu succeeded Talleyrand, did he play a backward part. His despatches at this period are among the best papers which he ever wrote, and scarcely ever has a statesman better served his country and Europe. He stood entirely unmoved by the outburst of emotion which swayed his colleagues and most of his countrymen, and with rare statesmanship carried out coolly, and with infinite tact as well as unbending resolution, a policy which events completely justified. He risked much, for he had nothing to gain as a party leader (as St John had in 1713). He was immensely helped by Wellington, whose papers are models of sound reasoning; but only a Foreign Minister who had obtained a complete ascendancy over his Cabinet and was utterly indifferent to the passing storms of popular passion could have carried such a policy to a triumphant conclusion. Throughout, he made no appeal to sentiment. His despatches are based entirely on an enlightened view of British interests; and their overwhelming commonsense made it impossible to his colleagues ultimately to resist his conclusions.

The opinion of the Cabinet and the country on this point was conveyed to him by Liverpool in a series of letters, which, if less imperatively phrased than those on the French "traitors," were yet clear and strong enough.

"The more I consider the present internal state of France," wrote Liverpool on July 10th, "and the little chance there is of security to Europe from the character and strength of the French Government, the more I am satisfied that we must look for security on the frontier, and in really weakening the power of France. This opinion is rapidly gaining ground in this country, and I think, even if Bonaparte was dead, there would now be considerable disappointment at any peace which left France as she was left by the Treaty of Paris, or even as she was before the Revolution¹."

On the 15th, when some news arrived of how things stood at Paris, Liverpool wrote, after a long sitting of the Cabinet, that the prevalent

¹ Yonge, *Life of Liverpool*, II. 190.

idea in the country was that "we are fairly entitled to avail ourselves of the present moment to take back from France the principal conquests of Lewis XIV¹." Castlereagh was ordered to sound the Allies on this point; but at the same time he was authorised, if the Allies objected to such strong measures, to agree to a temporary occupation of the northern barrier of France until a line of fortresses had been built in the Netherlands at the French expense. Nothing would have better pleased the majority of Castlereagh's colleagues at Paris than to have had placed before them the extreme view of the Cabinet. Of the Allies the Emperor of Russia was alone disposed to adopt a lenient policy—more lenient indeed than what Castlereagh himself advocated, for he would have been content to waive even a temporary occupation. Austria was inclined to go considerably further than Castlereagh in depriving France of territory, while Prussia and the smaller German Powers were demanding extensive acquisitions, including Alsace and Lorraine and the northern French fortresses. Both the Tsar and Castlereagh admitted that France must pay an indemnity. They wished this, however, to be a reasonable sum, to be settled in accordance with the ability of France to pay it within a fairly short time. Austria, Prussia and the minor German States were simply determined to bleed France, and they had already begun the process by inordinate extortions while they were in occupation. Talleyrand, meanwhile, let it be known that the King and his Ministers would not consent to sacrifice the slightest portion of French territory. In these circumstances, Castlereagh determined to come to an agreement with the Tsar. In an interview with him, he persuaded him to accept the British proposal for temporary occupation; and so close an agreement was established that the Tsar was induced to press on Austria and Prussia a paper that had been drawn up by Castlereagh and Wellington in conjunction with the Russian Ministers². Four days later, Castlereagh was able to forward home a plan of temporary occupation, drawn up by Wellington, which paid due heed to the susceptibilities of France, exempting Lille and Strassburg³. Neither the Cabinet nor the Allies were pleased with these suggestions. Castlereagh appears to have kept back from the former for two days the Austrian and Prussian answers, in order that his own arguments might have

¹ Liverpool to Castlereagh, July 15th, 1815. *Castlereagh Correspondence*, x. 431.

² But the paper was in reality almost entirely inspired by the British Ministers. *Sbornik of the Imperial Russian Historical Society*, cxii. 297.

³ Castlereagh to Liverpool, August 3rd, 1815. Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, xi. 123.

of the year 1790. This meant taking away from her Landau, the Saar valley, and part of Savoy, while leaving to her Avignon and other small territories, which had in 1789 been *enclaves* in her dominions. By the middle of August, Castlereagh was able to announce that Alexander was ready to support this scheme. On the 24th, he sent what was almost an ultimatum to his Cabinet, together with a long memorandum which reiterated all the arguments previously employed, and Lord Stewart was sent over with the documents to support by word of mouth the arguments of his brother¹. But the Cabinet had already given way. On the 23rd, Liverpool had already sent a reluctant consent. He and his colleagues now professed themselves entirely convinced, and Castlereagh was assured that he would be "most cordially and zealously supported and upheld by all your colleagues in this country²." He was thus able to turn his artillery without reserve on the recalcitrant Allies. On August 31st, he sent an impressive memorandum in reply to the Austrian and Prussian notes, supported by a paper drawn up by Wellington, which contained a vigorous and indeed unanswerable defence of the principle of temporary occupation, and which also put forward a practical scheme for carrying it out. Metternich was easily won over. In fact, he had from the beginning been in sympathy with Castlereagh's policy, but had found it necessary to put forward stronger views in deference to German public opinion. The Prussians put up a more determined fight, but they could not succeed when thus isolated. As for the smaller Powers, Castlereagh did not mince matters with them. To Gagern, who was carrying on an intrigue to transfer Luxemburg to Prussia and compensate the Netherlands with a large slice of French territory, he announced that such a course would mean the loss of the British guarantee. "This view of the question," reported Castlereagh, "appeared altogether to damp His Excellency's appetite for such acquisitions³." By this means, and by raising the indemnity from six to eight hundred millions, he at last succeeded in producing agreement among the Allies.

The terms were presented to the Talleyrand Ministry on September 16th. Talleyrand refused to consent to the losses of territory, and sent in an answer couched in very strong terms; but the discussions

¹ Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, xi. 137.

² Liverpool to Castlereagh, August 28th, 1815. *Castlereagh Correspondence*, x. 506.

³ Castlereagh to Liverpool, September 4th, 1815. F.O. Continent. 26; *British Diplomacy*, p. 376.

were suspended by the dismissal of his Ministry. The Ministers had, indeed, been subjected to ever increasing attacks from the Ultras during their whole period of office. Reaction was now everywhere dominant in France, and the White Terror reigned in some parts, Monsieur and the Duc d'Angoulême placing themselves at the head of the Opposition. Castlereagh regarded the Ultra party with the greatest distrust. "At present it is," he wrote, "a mere rope of sand, without leaders habituated to office, without any fixed system, but with an inordinate infusion of passion, resentment and spirit of inversion¹." He preferred even Fouché to such a Government. The dismissal of Talleyrand by the King at this moment he considered as especially impolitic, since it threw on the new Ministry the odium of accepting terms which their predecessors had rejected. Fortunately for France, at this grave crisis she found in the Duc de Richelieu one of the most admirable Ministers who ever represented her. He was singularly free from the baser elements of statesmanship, while his friendship for Alexander ensured the support of the Tsar. Castlereagh was, indeed, somewhat alarmed at the increase of Russian influence over the French Government, but he loyally accepted the situation. He told the king bluntly, however, that he must abandon the line which Talleyrand had taken up, and in the course of a long interview succeeded in convincing him of the necessities of the case².

With Richelieu, therefore, the negotiations proceeded swiftly. The Allies reduced their indemnity to seven hundred millions of francs, the temporary occupation was reduced to five or possibly three years, and the dismantling of some of the fortresses was waived. The result was to impose a heavy punishment on France, but one not out of proportion to her situation, and which need not, and in fact did not, drive her to a policy of revenge and despair. She lost the territories of Landau, Saarlouis, Mariembourg, Philippeville and certain parts of Savoy, and had to rase the fortifications of Huningen. Out of the sum fixed for her indemnity, 200 millions of francs, including the whole of Great Britain's share, were to be spent in the erection of fortresses on the north-eastern frontier. Moreover, a separate Convention laid on her the duty of compensating private claims against France, the exact amount of which was not specified. The Prussians were, at a later stage, to found enormous claims on this Article.

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, September 11th, 1815. *F.O. Continental Affairs—France*—*Diplomacy*, p. 377.

² Castlereagh to Liverpool, September 25th, 1815. *F.O. Continental Affairs—France*—*Diplomacy*, p. 379.

were prevented by Great Britain and Russia from insisting on them, and the total amount was only 240 millions of francs. France had already been forced to allow a large number of the works of art, of which she had plundered Europe during the Revolution and Napoleonic Wars, to be returned to their previous owners. Castlereagh had strongly supported the measure. He had, however, refused to accede to the monstrous suggestion, which the Prime Minister made at the express order of the Prince Regent, that some of these works of art should be brought to London. They were removed, not as a punishment, but as a tardy measure of justice to their original owners, and, as a matter of fact, the British Government helped some of the poorer claimants, including the Pope, to defray the heavy charges of their transference to their old homes. Lastly, Castlereagh obtained from Lewis XVIII, though even now only after much hesitation, the complete Abolition of the Slave-trade which Napoleon had already granted, and his consent to the establishment of a Commission at London, such as had been proposed at Vienna. He might, therefore, fairly claim that he had brought home a Peace which meant security for at least a period, and the infliction of a considerable punishment on France for her acquiescence in the return of Napoleon. It was, however, far from fully expressing the sentiments of the nation, and met with severe criticism when it was discussed in Parliament.

Though the outlines of the Treaty had been laid down by October 1st, the details of the Conventions on the occupation and the financial questions, which accompanied it, necessitated a series of detailed negotiations, and it was not signed until November 20th.

On this date too was signed another Treaty between the Four Great Powers—a renewal of that concluded at Chaumont, which, however, now contained new stipulations of great importance. Castlereagh had, from the first, intended to make the exclusion of Napoleon and his family from the Throne of France “part of the permanent law of Europe.”

“There can be no doubt,” he wrote so early as July 17th, “that, before we retire, the nation will have felt deeply what it is to be invaded by all Europe. If we make a European invasion the inevitable and immediate consequence of Bonaparte’s succession or that of any of his race to power in France, I am confident after the experience they have had of his impotence against such a confederacy and their own sufferings, that there is not a class in France, not excepting even the army, that will venture to adhere to him at the hazard of being again over-run by the armies of Europe, with the certainty of being dismembered and loaded with contribu-

tions. We committed a great error when last at Paris in not opposing the barrier of such a stipulation against his return, for there is no doubt he had address enough to make both the nation and the army believe that he might be restored and peace nevertheless preserved¹."

Such a policy was in his mind throughout all the negotiations of the Treaty of Peace, and his belief that security against a revival of French aggression would be better provided by its means was one of the reasons why he rejected all the plans of spoliation and dismemberment brought forward by the Allies. Before, however, this idea could be worked out in formal discussions, Alexander startled the Sovereigns and statesmen by the proposal which is known as the Holy Alliance. The idea of this extraordinary document had been suggested to him by Castlereagh's abortive proposal for a general guarantee made at the Congress of Vienna. But, in the Tsar's emotional mind, which was now passing through an acute religious crisis, it had assumed an entirely different shape. The document, which was to be personal to the Monarchs concerned, contained no express obligations, except that they would regulate their conduct according to the doctrines of the Christian religion. Both Castlereagh and Metternich regarded the proposal as a ludicrous one; but they could not afford to offend the Tsar. Castlereagh told Liverpool very frankly, that Alexander was not quite right in his head and must be humoured². Thus, though the forms of the British Constitution did not allow the Prince Regent to append his signature to the Treaty, he sent a personal letter expressing his agreement with its principles, which satisfied the expectations of the Tsar. All the other Sovereigns of Europe signed it, except the Sultan and the Pope, who were not invited; and the fact that the terms of the Treaty made it impossible for the former to add his name was by many regarded as a sinister design on the part of the Tsar. He had, indeed, significantly avoided raising the issue of Turkey on which Castlereagh's proposal had foundered; but there is little doubt of his sincerity. Nevertheless, this Treaty, which Castlereagh was soon forced to produce in the British Parliament, caused infinite embarrassment in later years, and, despite the fact that it was in design one of the most innocent documents ever issued, became the symbol of Reaction in the mouths

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, July 17th. F.O. Continent. 21; *British Diplomacy*, p. 349.

² Castlereagh to Liverpool, September 28th, 1815. Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, XI. 175.

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¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, July 17th. F.O. Continent. 21; *British Diplomacy*, p. 349.

of the Liberals of all countries, and a specially powerful weapon in the hands of the Opposition in England.

The Treaty of November 20th—the Treaty of the Quadruple Alliance—which expressed Castlereagh's own views, was of a very different nature. He had already indicated its scope in the Memorandum sent home by Lord Stewart, which had finally won the approval of the Cabinet to his policy. Alexander had immediately expressed his particular approbation of the proposal. He had, indeed, hastened to anticipate Castlereagh by producing a draft of such a Treaty, before the British Minister had himself prepared one. To this draft Castlereagh took immediate exception. It was drawn up, he said, in too vague and indefinite shape. It bore on the face of it "too strong and undisguised a complexion of interference on the part of the Allied Sovereigns in the internal affairs of France, without sufficiently connecting such interference with the policy which a due attention to the immediate security of their own dominions prescribed¹"; for Alexander had proposed that the Allies should guarantee both Lewis XVIII and the *Charte*. Castlereagh's project endeavoured to avoid these pitfalls. With the exception of the Sixth Article, it confined itself to a promise to observe the Treaty quite recently concluded with France, and to a renewal of the Treaty of Chaumont in terms which more expressly excluded the return of Bonaparte or any of his family to the throne of France. The only reference to Lewis XVIII was a promise to adopt this necessary measure "in concert amongst themselves and with his Most Christian Majesty²." Except for a few verbal alterations, the draft, as Castlereagh presented it, was accepted by the Cabinet and by his Allies, and it was this Treaty to which he refers whenever he speaks of the Alliance. It was simply a more explicit statement, in the light of the experience of the Hundred Days, of the policy for which he had been contending ever since 1813—the protection of Europe by special treaty against any renewal of aggressive war by France, the return of the Bonaparte family being accepted as implying the immediate renewal of such aggression.

But the Sixth Article actually introduced into the Treaty a new element of great importance, and its presence there appears to have been due to Castlereagh's own express desire. It reveals the fact that

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, October 15th, 1815. F.O. Continent. 29; *British Diplomacy*, p. 386.

² Castlereagh had written in his draft "*roi légitime*," but this phrase was abandoned in deference to Liverpool's criticism that it would cause discussions in Parliament.

Castlereagh proposed to institute a new system of diplomacy by Conference, which he considered as essential to the preservation of the peace of Europe. Article VI in its final shape runs as follows:

To facilitate and to secure the execution of the present Treaty, and to consolidate the connexions which at the present so closely unite the Four Sovereigns for the happiness of the World, the High Contracting Parties have agreed to renew their Meetings at fixed periods, either under the immediate auspices of the Sovereigns themselves, or by their respective Ministers, for the purpose of consulting upon their common interests, and for the consideration of the measures which at each of these periods shall be considered the most salutary for the repose and prosperity of Nations, and for the maintenance of the Peace of Europe.

This Article stands exactly as it was drawn up by Castlereagh in his draft. In Alexander's original proposal, the meetings had been merely intended to supervise the execution of the provisions in the Treaty dealing with France. It was Castlereagh who added the words which founded the so-called "Congress System"—periodic meetings of the statesmen to discuss the affairs of Europe round a table rather than by the old medium of notes and documents interchanged between the Courts through the medium of Ambassadors. The application, therefore, to a period of peace of the idea of diplomacy by Conference, gradually brought into being in the closing stages of the War, was due to Castlereagh more than to anyone else. There can be no doubt that he attached the highest importance to it, and regarded it as a piece of machinery highly essential for the maintenance of the peace of Europe. The Alliance constructed to protect Europe against French domination was clearly thought by him capable of extension into a system of informal Conferences, which, while leaving the Great Powers absolutely free to decide every case on its own merits, would enable them to continue the intimate relations established by these among themselves during the War. The time was indeed not yet ripe for the institution of a formal system of European Conferences, which alone could have rendered permanent so great a conception. The institutions of the various nations and the ideals of their rulers were too dissimilar for such a system to maintain itself, especially since no attempt was made to support it by the public opinion of the nations concerned. Yet, in devising it and steadfastly supporting it throughout his career, in spite of the opposition of his colleagues, Castlereagh showed himself, in a sense, the most enlightened statesman of his time. Blind as he was to the great movements which were to dominate the nineteenth century, he was yet far in advance of all his own countrymen in his recognition of the

fact that new methods of diplomacy were necessary, if Europe was to be preserved from the scourge of war. Nor was "the Concert of Europe," the main result of the system which he advocated, without its successes in the century that followed¹.

The reputation of Castlereagh as a Foreign Minister has changed a great deal in recent years. The attitude which Lord Salisbury took up in 1862 and Lord Morley and Mr Balfour were inclined to follow in 1891, has on the whole been justified by the researches of historians since the diplomatic papers of the time have been more closely studied. There is some danger perhaps of the reaction going too far in an age painfully conscious of the difficulty of such work as Castlereagh tried to accomplish. Yet the courage and common-sense of his diplomacy during the Pacification of Europe are such as to compel admiration even from those who detest many of the principles for which he stood. Rarely has a statesman been able to carry out his policy with such consistency and success. If we compare the legacy, which Pitt left to his pupil, with the results actually obtained, we see that, throughout these critical years, Castlereagh was aiming at a definite and complete scheme of reorganisation—nine-tenths of which he successfully accomplished. Much of this was of course in the nature of things, and Castlereagh happened to take office just as the tide of fortune turned. He reaped where other men had sown—Pitt, of course, and Canning in his earliest and possibly most brilliant period. Nevertheless, his own share in bringing about the new order of things was no small one, and the persistence with which he followed a definite line of policy to its logical conclusion is almost without parallel among diplomatists, who are, speaking generally, opportunists.

Castlereagh was, in fact, successful because his policy was dictated by principles which he thoroughly understood and believed in. Of his complete success in obtaining all the main objects for which his countrymen had fought for twenty years there can be no doubt. The maritime and colonial supremacy of Great Britain was completely established. That the Peace of Paris, no less than the Peace of Utrecht, might have been used to amass a few more possessions than were actually obtained is of course obvious. But who will deny that

¹ See C. K. Webster, "Castlereagh et le Système des Congrès?" *Revue des Études Napoléoniennes*, Jan.-Feb. 1919.

Castlereagh's moderation in dealing with the French and Dutch Colonies was anything but wise statesmanship? By the acquisition of the Cape, Malta, and the Mauritius Great Britain completed her strategic control of the trade routes of her Empire; while sane policy forbade her to aim at a monopoly of colonial possession. Moreover, Antwerp, Genoa, and the Ionian Islands were all rendered innocuous for the future; and, so far as human knowledge and foresight could be expected to reach, the strategic supremacy of Great Britain was made complete in every sea.

How mistaken some of Castlereagh's European plans were, the history of the nineteenth century has revealed! But it may be doubted whether any others would have served the needs of the moment so well. If the idea of the Balance of Power was merely the application of an outworn theory to an entirely fresh set of circumstances, yet it still had much in it which was necessary to the stability of Europe. When Castlereagh insisted that the centre of Europe must, at all costs, be strengthened against the dangers which threaten it from France and Russia, he was merely asserting a truth which experience has abundantly confirmed. That he sacrificed to it completely the national claims of Poland, Italy and Belgium was regrettable, but in the circumstances of the time, inevitable. Nor were any of these three peoples prepared to take advantage of national independence if it had been then offered to them. Of German unity, so far as his influence extended, Castlereagh was, of course, a consistent supporter.

Castlereagh's cardinal error, indeed, was, not that he ignored the principle of Nationality, which was not ready for recognition, but that he placed no faith in popular institutions. Had he made any attempt to help the new States to retain or establish some form of Constitutional government, there would have been some prospect of the gradual adaptation of the old system to the new forces. But Castlereagh's influence was everywhere on the side of autocracy. He seems sincerely to have believed that there was no alternative to such democracy as the French Revolution had taught the aristocrats of his generation to dread. He was indisputably in the right when he distrusted the absurd Constitutions which had been erected in the south of Europe. But Bentinck, with all his crudities and extravagances, was in closer touch with reality when he attempted to associate the people in the work of making the new Europe.

Yet Castlereagh was not without his own schemes for the maintenance of his work. Against the greatest danger of all—Revolutionary and Napoleonic France—he hoped that the Chaumont Treaty

would prove an adequate safeguard; and he proved right in the issue. This was his special contribution to the problem, and how much preferable to the wild schemes of plunder and spoliation which France's victims would have liked to put into force! French historians have of recent years acknowledged their debt to the magnanimity of Alexander; but they have scarcely given due credit to the services rendered to France by the commonsense and diplomatic skill of Castlereagh. Had he followed the popular line, France would undoubtedly have been deprived of ancient provinces and laden with crushing indemnities, and might easily have been driven to a policy of despair. For in these matters, and especially in the financial question, it was the voice of Great Britain, her most consistent and dangerous enemy, that counted for most—and it was only Castlereagh's commanding influence in the counsels of his countrymen which ensured that Great Britain should speak for justice and even mercy, rather than for revenge and national greed. If France was left with the frontier of the *Ancien Régime*, a fleet, some Colonies and a debt incomparably lighter than that of Britain herself, it was Castlereagh's wisdom and strength of character that was largely responsible for the result.

Castlereagh's larger schemes for the maintenance of the European Peace will be considered further in the second volume of this work. As has been pointed out, the Congress system was due more to him than to any other man. That it was devised mainly to give permanence to the new condition of affairs is probably true. The ideas of statesmen had not yet reached beyond a static Europe. Yet Castlereagh, more than any other statesman of his time, had learnt the lesson that the old system of diplomacy had proved to be hopelessly inadequate. His substitute of diplomacy by Conference was an application of his experiences of 1814-15, and revealed the weakness as well as the strength of his intelligence. He was a diplomatist *par excellence*. The informal Conferences, by which he had helped to solve the appallingly difficult problems of the settlement, he regarded as a new device of immense value. What he failed to see was that such inventions must prove to be unstable and unsuccessful, if they depended merely on the personal relations which two years of close intercourse with Continental statesmen had enabled him to establish. He failed, therefore (and the task was indeed at that time an impossible one), to give to the new ideas either the stability of formal interpretation or the driving force of public opinion. For the latter task, indeed, no one could have been less suitable than he; for he despised and ignored, so far as possible, the public opinion of his countrymen. He

was bound to fail, therefore, in the attempt which he made to conquer their insularity and show them that their own peace and happiness was bound up with that of Europe. Nevertheless, he made an experiment of the greatest value to posterity which, also, redeemed the statesmanship of the Pacifications of something of the reproach that it had learnt none of the lessons of its times.

Like all successful men of action, however, Castlereagh was apt to place too much trust in his own contribution to human progress. He was acutely aware that he stood almost alone in England in possessing a knowledge of Continental affairs. It was thus natural that he should exaggerate the importance of the Foreign Office and distrust the share which Parliament or public opinion might play in International policy. He was not above intrigue, as the affair of Murat and one or two later passages in his life reveal, and he had the natural predilection of an expert for methods, which he had been able to employ with success and credit to himself. The weakness of the Opposition which he had to face in the House of Commons doubtless helped to exaggerate these defects. Had Canning gone over to the other side, instead of weakly accepting a place under the Government during these critical years, Castlereagh might have been forced to take a different line. As it was, he was never able to make any impression on the best minds of his generation.

By the end of 1815, in fact, the greatest period of his career was closed. He had controlled the policy of his country at an all-important moment in her history with a firmness of purpose and consistency of aim almost without parallel. He had seen to it that her vital interests had everywhere been protected and maintained. He had by new and ingenious expedients attempted to associate her permanently with the European System. He had established his own position among European statesmen and was a power in their Councils which could not be ignored. But he was the last man to cope intelligently with the new forces which had grown up in his own country during the years of war; indeed, few statesmen are, who conduct a great struggle to its conclusion. Though he was something more than a skilled diplomatist—namely, a Foreign Minister with principles of action—he could do nothing to teach these principles to others. Thus, he died a few years later, the most lonely and friendless of all the great Ministers of England—so hated and condemned that it has been reserved for a later generation to do justice to the great qualities which he undoubtedly possessed.

CHAPTER V

THE AMERICAN WAR AND THE TREATY OF GHENT, 1814

I

THROUGHOUT the period subsequent to the Peace of Amiens the relations between the United States and Great Britain were strained almost to breaking-point. This condition of affairs was due, very largely, to the attitude which Great Britain assumed as a belligerent Power, though there were also other causes of dispute between the two peoples of a serious nature which would have arisen even if Europe had remained at peace. Two reasons alone had prevented the War which at last broke out in June 1812 from beginning at a far earlier date—the wrongs which France had inflicted on America, and the weakness of the United States against the overwhelming maritime power of Great Britain. Indeed, had British statesmen shown themselves but a little more prescient in the years 1809–1812, they could almost certainly have delayed the outbreak, until the course of events in Europe would of itself have prevented it. As it was, the successes of the later stages of the Napoleonic Wars were embittered by the course of a futile and inconclusive struggle between Great Britain and America, which in itself settled none of the points at issue. Rarely has there been in history a war fought with such bitterness and determination, if with singular incapacity on both sides, which has terminated without a single one of the original causes of the war appearing in the Treaty of Peace. This result was of course due to the fact that the War was a by-product of the European War, and the causes that produced it ceased at the European Peace. Nevertheless, men do not easily give up principles for which they have been ready to shed their blood. Fortunately, in this case Great Britain, the stronger Power, had never insisted on a formal recognition of her rights. She was content if she was able to refuse to surrender them formally. Moreover, though public opinion vehemently supported the War while it was being waged and there was a far greater bitterness displayed in its course than during the Revolution, yet for Great Britain the War was after all a minor affair. Her main energies had

been concentrated on Europe, where she had won a more complete triumph than her people had ever hoped to attain. She could accept, not, indeed, without some considerable sacrifice of pride, the humiliations and failures of the American War; and the consciousness that they had been able to inflict these on the British Empire, flushed with victory, compensated the Americans for the failure to establish the principles for which they had fought.

The two main causes of the War were the impressment of American sailors by British ships of War, and the losses imposed upon American trade by the British regulations as to neutral commerce. Both were considered by the British people absolutely necessary to their success against Napoleon; and, in actual fact, their view was to a large extent a correct one. So long as the methods then in vogue for maintaining the naval power of Great Britain continued, it was essential that no easy refuge should be found from the dangers and trials of that service. By 1812, indeed, the main danger of the maritime war had disappeared, and great concessions could undoubtedly have been made to America without endangering British sea power. Nevertheless the extent of the War and the future demands on the fleet could not be foreseen, and one concession might lead to another. Interference with neutral commerce was, also, in some form essential to the winning of the war. Had Napoleon been able to use a neutral fleet, he could almost certainly have successfully defied the maritime power of Great Britain, while irreparable injury would have been inflicted on British commerce. Yet Great Britain was able, in June 1812, to relax to some extent restrictions, which had grown more severe with every year of war, though too late to avert the struggle with the United States.

The long diplomatic struggle that had been carried on between the two Powers has been narrated in the previous Chapter of this Volume. It dated in a sense, as Mahan points out, from before the War and, in one aspect, was a continuation of the War of Independence. But, from the outbreak of the War, the effort which the United States was making to obtain a due share of the carrying trade and colonial commerce of the world took upon itself a new significance. A competition, which in peace time was indeed resented by Britain and France alike, became a vital factor in the decision of the struggle in Europe. Since 1794, when the Senate refused to accept the few concessions which Jay had secured as in any way adequate to satisfy the pretensions of the United States, dispute had succeeded dispute, and incident incident. The Americans gradually found that their

position as a neutral was almost as difficult as if they had been a belligerent. Every expedient was tried, even the practical abandonment of their over-seas commerce, to find an issue from the position in which they were placed. But the European War still went on, and, as it broadened and grew yearly more intense, the restrictions to which the Americans had to submit grew more and more irksome.

Most insulting of all to national pride was the exercise of the British right of search. The British navy was recruited by impressment, and it was only natural that many British sailors should seek a freer and more lucrative career in American ships. But Great Britain peremptorily refused to allow any such transference of allegiance, and, alike in British and Colonial ports and on the high seas, they exerted their right to force their sailors to return to British ships. No period of naturalisation was regarded as sufficient to relieve a British sailor from his obligations to his country; and, since the distinction between Britishers and Americans was not great, and many British sailors posed as Americans in order to escape impressment, it was inevitable that many Americans should be forcibly taken from ships of their own country and made to serve in British vessels. The right was exerted with the greatest brutality by the British fleet, and in 1807 the attack on the American frigate 'Chesapeake' appeared to denote that not even American men-of-war were to be exempt and all but led to an immediate outbreak of hostilities. The British Government did not, indeed, defend the action of its subordinates in this case; but it refused, then as always, to discuss the general question of impressment. The right of search, it was claimed, had been exercised from earliest times by Great Britain. No expedient could be devised to distinguish accurately between Americans and British. It must be, therefore, left to the British naval officers to exercise their discretion as to how and when they applied the undoubted maritime rights of their country. The claim to search American vessels of war was, indeed, abandoned, and offers of compensation for the 'Chesapeake' affair were made. But these were not such as to satisfy the American Government. Erskine's conciliatory policy was rejected by the British Cabinet. F. J. Jackson, who succeeded him, carried out his Instructions in so uncompromising a fashion that the American Government refused to negotiate further with him, and from the beginning of 1810 to June 1811 Great Britain was only represented by a *Chargé d'affaires* at Washington. A. J. Foster was then sent by the British Government, and the 'Chesapeake'

affair was closed by an offer of reparation which was accepted. The main question still remained open. The British Government increased American bitterness by attempting to prove that British seamen were detained against their will on American warships. At last, the humiliation could no longer be borne by the people of the United States; and perhaps the main cause of the War which was declared on June 18th was the hopelessness of obtaining any relief on this question except by declaring it. At any rate, even when the news of the abandonment of the Orders in Council reached America after the Declaration of War, the United States was prepared to continue hostilities because of this question alone.

More serious, however, to the national interests of the United States was the second cause of the War—the interference by the Belligerent Powers in Europe with her commerce. The destruction of French maritime commerce by the British fleet had thrown open to the United States the carrying trade between France and her Colonies, which had hitherto been as jealously guarded as that of the British Empire. But, by the exercise of a right which had first been applied in the Seven Years' War and hence was called the "Rule of 1756," Britain forbade the United States from taking advantage of the opportunity thus offered to her. Such trade was regarded not as a neutral service but as active assistance to the enemy, and was, therefore, met with the full exercise of the belligerent right of capture. When Spain and Holland became part of the French system, the rule was extended to their Colonies likewise. The Americans, at first, endeavoured to get over the restriction by breaking their journey to Europe at ports of the United States; but the application by the British Government in 1799 of the doctrine of "continuous voyage" defeated this expedient.

If great loss was inflicted on their commerce by this rule, yet it was true that the Americans had not, for the most part, enjoyed the privileges of this trade in peace time. But it was not long before they began, also, to be prevented from carrying on the trade between their own country and Europe, which they had maintained before the War. By the practice of "blockade" Great Britain, so early as 1799, forbade all trading with ports controlled by France, and rendered all ships sailing to them subject to capture. After the peace of Amiens, as Napoleon obtained control over all Europe the area of such "blockade" was extended. That such measures, in part at least, were merely retaliatory to the paper "blockades" established by Napoleon himself,

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But the Democrats rightly thought that the events of 1811 had made it impossible for their opponents to resist the strong feeling which was manifest everywhere in the United States. They were proved right by the issue. The case that was presented to Congress was an overwhelming one to American eyes; and, though in States like Massachusetts and Connecticut, opposition went as far as passive resistance to the measures of the Central Administration, yet, on the whole, the mass of the nation was behind the Government in their struggle, however tardily they came to understand the responsibilities which it threw on them.

In England also the War was popular. The commercial interests were, indeed, dismayed, but the governing classes were united in regarding the American Declaration of War as a treacherous attack on a country that was contending for the liberties of the world. The Whigs, naturally, endeavoured to throw as much blame on the Government as possible; but they dared not deny the necessity of the exercise of the British rights which were the cause of the War. Among the mass of the people there was an intense bitterness, and they demanded, not merely the maintenance of British rights, but the punishment of the Americans for their attack on Great Britain at the crisis of her struggle with Napoleon. The confiscation of all American ships in British ports, immediately the news of the American Declaration of War was received, was an index of the manner in which the struggle would be carried on.

Nevertheless, an attempt was made on both sides to put an end to the War almost as soon as it was begun. Neither side had accurately gauged the stubbornness and passion with which their opponents would hold to their own view of the case. Castlereagh, however, who had just come into office when the War broke out, while rigorously maintaining the British case, was from the first as conciliatory in manner as possible in all American questions. The British Government were under the impression that the United States would not continue the War for impressment alone, now that the Orders in Council were removed. Accordingly, Admiral Warren, who was sent out in command of the naval operations against America, was ordered to offer an armistice with a view to a termination of hostilities. No concessions were, however, offered—merely a threat that the Orders in Council would be reinforced if peace were not made. Monroe, Madison's Secretary of State, however, insisted on the right of impressment being given up even before an armistice could be con-

cluded, and refused to treat on any other terms than that this practice should be open to negotiation¹.

Previously to this, Russell had made an offer in London by order of his Government. The Americans had hoped that Great Britain would shrink from a new war while they were so deeply involved in the European struggle. Russell was instructed to offer a law against employing British seamen in American vessels, in return for the cessation of impressment. But the inability of the Government of the United States to enforce any such measure had been all along asserted, and with truth, by the British Government. Castlereagh therefore rejected this overture, though he was careful to add that, if any practical expedient could be found to prevent British sailors being employed on American ships, he would be glad to discuss it. Further negotiations for an armistice by Russell were also without any result, except that the issues, which divided the two countries, were restated in their most uncompromising form².

The War was thus continued; but it bore a very different aspect in the two countries concerned. For America, it became the one vital question on which all others must depend. Her party issues, the relations of the States to the Central Government, the ambitions of her politicians, the whole future and prosperity of the country, depended on the result. For Great Britain, dangerous and detrimental to her interests as the War was, it was yet completely subordinate to the far vaster struggle with Napoleon, and the reconstruction of Europe that followed. Not until the middle of 1814 was she able to direct her full military and naval strength towards it, and, even then, her statesmen were more preoccupied with European problems than with America. Nevertheless, she was able to inflict far more damage on the United States than she received. Her defeats at sea and on the Lakes, and the depredations of American privateers on British commerce, were, in themselves, serious additions to the exhaustion and strain of a long war. But they were injuries that could be easily borne by an empire that held the carrying trade of the world in its hands. The United States on the contrary was practically cut off from commerce with the rest of the world. Indeed, as time went on, communications between the several States which largely depended on the sea were seriously impaired. The injuries went so far that, towards the end of the struggle, there was at least a possibility that some of the States

¹ *British and Foreign State Papers*, I. 1492.

² *British and Foreign State Papers*, I. 1473.

would break away from the Federation and conclude a separate peace. Nor, without allies, could the United States hope ultimately to force her adversary to give in, if events in Europe did not bring about her submission. But, in Europe, the situation grew daily more favourable to Great Britain almost from the moment that the War broke out. It was not long therefore before the statesmen of the United States were more ready for peace than those of Britain.

The first attempt to secure peace came through the mediation of Russia. In 1812 Russia had become the Ally of England, and had therefore an interest in endeavouring to put an end to a conflict which lessened the ability of Great Britain to help her against Napoleon. By British influence, Russia had been able to negotiate agreements with Turkey and Sweden at the critical moment of her struggle with Napoleon. She might now hope to render similar services in return. Moreover, it was but likely that the United States would be disposed to view favourably an offer of mediation from Russia, since the latter Power had been a devoted champion of Neutral Rights. There was, indeed, in Russia a party which viewed the alliance with Great Britain with great dislike, and Count Romantzoff, who was chief of it, held the office of Chancellor until the end of 1813, though he remained at Petrograd deprived of all real power. At the Russian capital, the United States was represented by one of the most brilliant of her statesmen, John Quincy Adams, later the author of the Monroe doctrine and President of the United States. Though he deplored the war, yet he hated and distrusted Great Britain. "The English talk," he noted in his diary in 1812, "much about their honor and national morality—sometimes without meaning, but generally with a mixture of hypocrisy and self delusion in about equal proportions. Dr Johnson, in one of his poems, honestly avows that in his lifetime English honor had become a standing jest; and it has assuredly not since then improved¹." Adams was also fond of comparing impressment, which Britain was so determined to maintain, with the Slave Trade, which she was anxious to abolish. Count Romantzoff thus found him a congenial companion, and Adams was easily able to convince the Chancellor that the United States had no desire for any connexion with France. The result was an offer, in September, of the mediation of Russia to settle the dispute. This offer did not reach Washington till the beginning of March 1813, when the American Government showed the greatest eagerness to accept it². Despite some notable

¹ *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, II. 400.

² *British and Foreign State Papers*, I. 1533.

victories at sea, the Americans had failed lamentably in Canada, and events in Europe were not propitious. The offer was therefore immediately accepted and Albert Gallatin, the Secretary of the Treasury, and Bayard, a Senator of experience, were dispatched forthwith to Petrograd to join Adams in negotiating a peace through the mediation of Russia. Bayard was a man of but moderate parts and moreover disliked Adams, but Gallatin was an especially suitable appointment. Of Swiss origin, he was able to combine a devotion to America with an understanding of the European point of view. He had great charm of manner as well as great abilities and he possessed many friends in England. Ultimately it was more due to his wisdom and ingenuity than to any other cause that peace was concluded. The Instructions which the Plenipotentiaries received, however, insisted on the American view of impressment, blockade and other matters in dispute, and showed little signs of concession. But the mediation had already been rejected by Great Britain before the American Envoys arrived in Europe.

It was, indeed, impossible on many grounds for such an offer to be accepted. A dispute with America was still regarded as an almost domestic question in which Foreign Powers could have no concern. To begin negotiations for peace under Russian mediation might perhaps provide an opportunity to bring British maritime rights into the general discussions—and, as has been seen, British statesmen were determined to exclude them completely. Nor could Russia be regarded as a suitable mediator, since she had herself previously shown that she agreed with the position which the United States had taken up. The mediation was therefore rejected, and Instructions to that effect were sent to Cathcart. Since, however, Alexander had ceased to correspond with Romantzoff on public affairs and was anxious to force him to resign, no official notification was sent to Petrograd. The American Commissioners were thus placed in a peculiarly perplexing and humiliating position, though Romantzoff endeavoured to conceal his own impotence by an attempt to make a second offer through Lieven, which that Ambassador refused to deliver. Gallatin's position was made still more difficult by the fact that the Senate refused to ratify his appointment, because he still retained his post as Secretary of the Treasury. Gallatin had, however, not been idle. He got in touch with friends in Europe to whom he wrote conciliatory letters, and, in particular, with Alexander Baring of the famous banking house in London. Baring, in a very frank letter, explained the

considered that the reinforcements despatched to America must improve their position there and thus exercise a favourable effect on the discussions. Gallatin was pressed to consent to a removal of the place of meeting to Ghent, as being nearer London; and he succeeded in obtaining Clay's consent to this proposal before Adams arrived. The American Commissioners, therefore, gradually assembled at Ghent in June and the early days of July. Even then the British Commissioners, who were not appointed until May 27th, were slow to put in an appearance. The Government was, indeed, occupied with the visits of the Continental Sovereigns and statesmen and the preparations for the coming Congress; but the delay was not altogether accidental. Gallatin stayed at London long enough to obtain an interview with Alexander, who, however, told him he could give no help. "England will not admit a third party to interfere in her disputes with you," and he intimated that this was on account of "the former Colonial relations." Gallatin, therefore, set off for Ghent without very high hopes of success¹.

The personnel of the British Commissioners was so inferior to that of the American, that it appeared as if the British Government did not attach much importance to the negotiations and wished them to fail. The first Plenipotentiary was Lord Gambier, a sailor of no great capacity and entirely ignorant of the matter which he had now to discuss. The real head of the mission was Henry Goulburn, the Under-secretary of State for War and Colonies, who was later to be Chancellor of the Exchequer in two Administrations. He was, however, a man of but small reputation at this time, and, though not without a certain capacity, was pedantic and narrow minded and entirely incapable of appreciating the great issues which were about to be discussed. The third member of the Commission was William Adams, a lawyer who had a deep knowledge of maritime law, but was in no sense a diplomatist. Such men could not compare with Gallatin and Adams, or even with Clay and Bayard. They had not, of course, to bear the same responsibility as the Americans, since they could easily be furnished with the Instructions of the Government. They became, indeed, for the most part little more than messengers, through whom the Cabinet's decisions could be conveyed to the American Commissioners. They did not arrive at Ghent until August 6th, having kept the Americans waiting a month. The interval had not improved the temper of men like Adams and Clay, and neither side appeared to expect a successful issue of the discussion.

¹ *Diary of James Gallatin*, p. 25.

II

As has been stated in the previous section the negotiations which began at Ghent on August 6th were not viewed hopefully by either side. The Americans were dismayed at the long delay in opening the Conferences, and the personnel of the British Mission appeared so inferior to their own that they could scarcely believe the British Government to intend serious discussion. Goulburn, on the other hand, immediately detected in the American Commissioners an obstinate adherence to their own point of view, which ill became the representatives of a weaker nation in its transactions with the British Empire. The negotiations were also, from the outset, rendered difficult by the fact that the Instructions with which the two Missions were severally furnished for the most part dealt with quite different subjects.

The British Instructions, dated July 28th, 1814¹, were drawn up under the influence of the great successes in Europe. They show that the British Government considered itself now so much stronger than the Americans that it could dictate terms. These went far beyond the causes of the War, and seized the opportunity to place British power in North America in a far stronger position than in 1812. The Instructions were divided into four main heads. In the first place, no concessions whatever were to be made on the questions of British maritime rights—whether impressment, or the “Rule of 1756.” Secondly, under the pretence of protecting our Indian allies a large Indian zone was to be removed from the sovereignty of the United States and made into a sort of “buffer” State. Thirdly, extensive rectifications of frontier were demanded, which were urged as necessary on the grounds of the acquisition of Louisiana and part of the Floridas by the United States and their intention, made manifest during the war, of conquering Canada. Last, the special rights given to the United States in the Newfoundland Fisheries by the Treaty of 1783 were declared to be abrogated by the war. Nevertheless, the strategy of the British Government was not ill-conceived, however unskilful were its tactics. They were in fact determined to exploit the military advantages which they considered the European Peace had given them. They were disappointed in their hopes; but the Peace which they eventually secured was no worse than what they could have obtained at the outset, though it was only secured at the expense of a diplomatic defeat.

¹ *Castlereagh Correspondence*, x. 67. An earlier draft, as well as some correspondence between the Commissioners and Castlereagh, was published by Mr Ford in the *Transactions of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, December 1914—January 1915, pp. 138–164.

The British could of course refer to their Court and, as a matter of fact, did so on every occasion before they committed themselves; but the Americans could only obtain further Instructions after a long lapse of time. This inability was not altogether a disadvantage in the manoeuvring for position which formed the first part of the negotiations. Throughout the negotiations, the case of the Americans was handled with far greater skill than that of the British. The stiff and pedantic Goulburn was no match for men like Gallatin and Adams, and was betrayed into admissions which were used with great effect in America. The Government were indeed responsible for large claims made by Britain at the outset of the negotiations; but Goulburn throughout let slip no opportunity of stating his case in as harsh and uncompromising a manner as possible, and his inept diplomacy was to have considerable effect on the public opinion of both countries, when Madison published the first series of Notes exchanged. Neither he nor his Government grasped the difficulty of negotiating with a country like the United States, where the Executive Power was to so great an extent controlled in its conduct of foreign relations, not only by public opinion but by the Constitution itself. The British Commissioners were, also, less well informed as to the legal and historical aspects of their case than the American, with results sometimes unfortunate for our side.

The original American Instructions had been drawn up for the negotiation under the mediation of Russia, and were dated April 15th, 1813. They, naturally, dwelt mainly upon the subject of impressment and made satisfaction on that point a *sine qua non* of the Peace. The American view of other neutral rights, such as a definition of Blockade and the "Rule of 1756," was also urged, but these were treated as subordinate points, which could be waived, if necessary. To all other matters the principle of *status quo antea* was to be applied. These Instructions were supplemented by various letters to the Commissioners, in which the same high tone was maintained until June 25th and 27th, when, the news of the European Peace having reached America, Instructions were addressed to the Commissioners which allowed them, as a last resource, to allow the subject of impressment to be entirely omitted from the Treaty¹.

The Americans, on the whole, handled their case exceedingly well. They drew from the British Commissioners their extremest demands and then proceeded to reply to them in Notes, which were written for

¹ *British and Foreign State Papers*, 1. 1552.

publication at home, and produced exactly the impression which was desired. By this means, the negotiation was made to serve important political ends. The chief weakness of the American Delegation lay in their distrust and dislike of one another. But Gallatin gradually obtained something like an ascendancy over his colleagues, and Adams was too patriotic and high-minded not to submit to him. In the end, Gallatin, by judicious conciliation at critical moments, was always able to prevent the negotiations from being broken off; and the Peace must be considered as largely due to his unremitting efforts.

The first meeting at the house of the British Mission—(a circumstance which caused the Americans, always more sensitive as to their dignity than representatives of monarchical States, much searching of heart)—resulted in the British opening their demands¹. The Americans were dismayed at their extent, and replied at a second meeting that their Instructions did not permit them to discuss the questions of the Indians or the Fisheries, while asking for more explicit information as to the British intentions. These were given them in a third meeting on August 19th. The British then demanded that the Americans should be entirely excluded from maintaining any naval force on the Lakes, the natural frontier between Canada and the United States, and that they should grant to the British a direct route from Halifax to Quebec, which meant extensive cessions of territory, and also access to the Mississippi from Lake Superior. The Indian stipulations had already been made a *sine qua non* of peace by the British Commissioners, in accordance with their Instructions, and they supplied such phrasing to their territorial demands as to make them seem “equally necessary” to the conclusion of peace. In this, they went much further than the Cabinet, or at any rate Liverpool and Castlereagh, had intended. Castlereagh visited Ghent on his way to the Vienna Congress. He did not interfere in the negotiations; but, though Goulburn assured him that the Americans were disposed both to treat and sign the proposed frontier and Indian arrangements, he disapproved of the peremptory tone adopted in the British Notes². Stated, however, as they were, they gave a fine opportunity to the American Commissioners. Even Gallatin now despaired of peace. “Great Britain wants war in order to cripple us,” he wrote to Monroe, “she wants

¹ *British and Foreign State Papers*, I. 1578.

² Castlereagh to Liverpool, August 28th, 1814; Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, IX. 192.

to consider the American counter-project in a far more yielding spirit than had seemed possible¹

The American *Projet* (November 10th) was the result of a violent discussion; but it was, in the main, the work of Gallatin and, therefore, while it stated the American case strongly, avoided needless offence and made one or two suggestions towards compromise. The basis of *uti possidetis* was again refused and that of the *status quo* offered; but boundary commissions were suggested as a means to settle the main territorial points in dispute. Access to the Mississippi was, also, offered in exchange for British acquiescence in the new Louisiana boundaries. The American attitude on the Fisheries question was maintained. Articles were also suggested on impressment and blockade. Indemnities were demanded for the irregular captures of American ships before the outbreak of War, and for the acts contrary to International Law committed during its course. This last article was an attempt to obtain damages for the destruction of the Government buildings at Washington.

Goulburn's comments on the *Projet* amounted to a refusal of almost the whole of it; but the Cabinet viewed the matter in a different light. The unsatisfactory state of the negotiations at Vienna and Wellington's letter had determined them to abandon all claims for increase of territory². The publication of the first part of the negotiations by Madison was, also, a diplomatic stroke of great value. It roused the spirit of the American nation, Federalists and Democrats alike indignantly rejecting the idea of cession of territory, while it also caused strong criticism in Great Britain. Alexander Baring gave expression to these sentiments in a debate in the House on November 21st, and the Government were forced to declare that they had never meant to make territorial cessions a *sine qua non* of peace. The reply, therefore, which the Cabinet sent to Ghent on November 22nd was meant, if possible, to obtain agreement. The basis of *uti possidetis* and the control of the Lakes were completely abandoned and the way to peace thus opened, much to the dismay of Goulburn. That most of the other American demands were refused was of small consequence, since on none of these were the Americans prepared to break off negotiations. The proposals as to boundary commissions was accepted, while access to the Courts of either country was suggested

¹ Liverpool to Castlereagh, November 4th, 1814; Liverpool to Wellington, November 4th, 1814; Wellington to Liverpool, November 7th, 9th, 18th, 1814; Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, ix. 405, 406, 422, 424, 436.

² Liverpool to Castlereagh, November 18th, 1814; Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, ix. 438.

instead of indemnities for damages. An article for the payment of the expenses of prisoners of war was also added, and it was further suggested that the hostilities should cease only on the ratification of the Treaty. Possibly, this last stipulation was made in order to give time for the expedition preparing against New Orleans to obtain its objective, but, considering the part played by the Senate in Foreign Affairs, it was not one to which the American Commissioners could object. On the receipt of this Note, Gallatin felt that peace was really in sight and did his utmost to get his colleagues to meet the British demands as far as possible. The Americans, therefore, now withdrew their demands as to impressment, leaving the matter open. Gallatin even succeeded in obtaining the consent of the majority of his colleagues to granting access to the Mississippi on condition of the American view of the Fishery rights being accepted. At the same time, the Americans asked for a conference and the Commissioners thus met again officially after an interval of almost three months. Now that verbal discussions could be substituted for written communications, affairs went on much more quickly and smoothly. Where deadlocks occurred, the matter could generally be solved by omitting altogether the question in dispute. In this way, eventually, both the Mississippi Claims and the Fisheries question were removed from the Treaty and reserved for future discussions. The possession of some insignificant islands in Passamaquoddy Bay was adjusted by a judicious compromise by which neither side gave up any substantial claim. The Americans accepted an article condemning the Slave Trade.

These discussions occupied another three weeks. They were conducted with the utmost secrecy; for, when the Americans saw that peace was really to be obtained they were anxious that nothing should interrupt the harmony of the proceedings. At last, on December 24th, the Treaty was signed with more expressions of mutual goodwill than had at one time seemed possible. The document is a curious commentary on the four months' discussions. Scarcely any of the subjects about which there had been such violent controversy were mentioned in it. Since these include the points for which the United States had gone to war, the Treaty was, in a sense, a victory for Great Britain, who never demanded that other countries should recognise her maritime rights in theory but only insisted on them in practice. But, since the War was now over, the Americans could claim that it was no longer necessary to continue to fight against abuses which had ceased to exist. All that was now left of the British demands brought

forward in August was an innocuous clause restoring peace to the Indians. In the same way, the Americans had had to abandon their claims for damages. Apart from the clause on the Abolition of the Slave Trade, which was put in the most general way, the rest of the Treaty merely consisted of clauses referring all the disputed boundary questions to special commissioners.

The British Commissioners had added at the last moment a clause that the Ratifications must be made without any change or reservation, if peace was to result. For this they were criticised by the Government; but the result showed that they were right. In the United States the ratification was hastened so that Peace might ensue. It did not, however, take place in time to prevent the Americans from defeating the British expedition to New Orleans. On the whole, the Treaty was very well received in the United States, and the American Commissioners were welcomed home as men who had conducted a difficult negotiation to the credit of their country. Despite the fact that they had obtained no satisfaction for any of the grievances to avenge which they had fought the War, the American people instinctively felt that they had escaped a great danger by successfully resisting without Allies the might of the British Empire at the height of its power and prestige.

In England opinions were less favourable. The old Tory school was incensed that no castigation had been inflicted for the treacherous attack which, they considered, had been made on them at the crisis of the Great War. But the feeling did not go very deep. The commercial interests were delighted, and other critics might reflect that the maritime principles which had produced the defeat of France had been preserved. The return of Napoleon diverted the thoughts of the nation to other dangers in the midst of which it could not but be thankful that peace had been concluded with America. On the whole, while the jealousy and bitterness roused by the War lasted for generations, there was immediately a very powerful body of opinion in both countries which was determined that it should not recur. A high Tory like Alison could indeed write even as late as 1842: "Little doubt remains that out of premature and uncomplete pacification the germs of a future and calamitous war between the two countries will spring¹." Yet, before a century had elapsed, every subject in dispute at Ghent had either been relegated to oblivion or amicably settled by mutual concessions.

¹ Alison, *History of Europe*, x. 749.

Appendixes to Chapters II—III

APPENDIX A

THE CAUSES OF THE RUPTURE WITH FRANCE

F.O. Holland, 41.

GRENVILLE to AUCKLAND.

Whitehall, Nov. 23, 1792.

H.M.'s satisfaction at the effect of the British Declaration to the Estates of Holland. Auckland is to keep up their resolution. "I am strongly inclined to believe that it is the present intention of the prevailing party in France to respect the rights of this country and of the [Dutch] Republic; but it will undoubtedly be necessary that the strictest attention should be given to any circumstances which may seem to indicate a change in this respect¹."

Ibid.

NAGEL to GRENVILLE.

Londres, Nov. 29, 1792.

"La situation critique où se trouve la République des Provinces Unies, non seulement depuis l'invasion et la conquête que M. Dumourier vient de faire des Pays Bas Autrichiens, mais aussi par la Résolution que le Conseil Exécutif de France vient de prendre le 16 du courant relative à la navigation libre de l'Escaut et de la Meuse, m'impose le devoir de rappeler sans cesse la sollicitude de Votre Excellence sur le danger pressant qui menace un Allié fidèle; et sans vouloir anticiper sur les ordres que je pourrai recevoir de mes Maîtres, je croirois n'avoir point satisfait à la fidélité que je Leur dois, ni à la confiance dont Ils m'ont honoré, si je ne priois pas Votre Excellence d'observer:

"1. Que le Général Dumourier, en voulant ouvrir le passage de l'Escaut, veut violer le territoire de la République, intention que Leurs Hautes Puissances étoient parfaitement d'accord avec S.M.B. de nullement attribuer à aucune des Puissances Belligérentes, comme il (constate?) par leur réponse à la Déclaration faite le 16 du courant par Son Excellence My Lord Auckland.

"2. Que le Conseil Exécutif de France par sa Déclaration du 16 du courant a manifesté ouvertement ses desseins contre les Intérêts de la République, tout en brisant les obligations les plus sacrées que la France avoit contractées par le Traité de Fontainebleau en date du 8 Novembre 1785... Ces observations, My Lord, je n'en doute pas, ont déjà été faites par les Ministres de S.M. et je ne saurais non plus envisager comme

¹ Grenville had not then heard of the French Decrees of November 16th, 19th. For other letters between Auckland and Grenville see *Dropmore Papers*, vol. II. and *Journal... of Lord Auckland*, vol. II.

problématiques les bonnes intentions de la Grande Bretagne, vis-à-vis de son plus ancien Allié, pour lequel Elle a non seulement fait les efforts les plus généreux, mais encore à qui Elle a garanti sa tranquillité intérieure et extérieure. Ainsi je ne puis craindre qu'il puisse paroître indiscret de ma Part de renouveler les instances, faites et Jeudi et Dimanche passés, auprès de Votre Excellence pour qu'il plaise à S.M.B. de faire veiller très-exactement sur ce qui se passe dans les Ports d'Ostende et de Dunkerque; et si à cette Bonté Elle vouloit ajouter le rassemblement d'une escadre aux Dunes ou à Gravesend, qui pût se porter directement vers la Hollande, en cas de besoin, les Etats Généraux en seroient justement reconnoissants, ceux qui veulent Leur nuire seroient peut-être contenus, et la tranquillité publique ainsi heureusement conservée...."

Ibid.

AUCKLAND to GRENVILLE.

Hague, Nov. 30, 1792.

"...The Dutch Ministers are anxious to learn the sentiments of the King and of his Ministers. It is their object in the meantime to temporize as far as may be practicable without essential disgrace or detriment; and the Grand Pensionary assures me that great activity continues to be used in preparing two or three frigates, with gun-boats and floating batteries."

Ibid.

SAME to SAME.

Hague, Dec. 25, 1792.

He advises the issue of a British Declaration stating our love of peace and order, and our resolve both to support Holland (if attacked) and to aid other peoples to maintain "their religion, constitution, property and independence."

Brit. Mus. Add. MSS. 34,446.

GRENVILLE to AUCKLAND.

Whitehall, Dec. 29, 1792.

He sends his despatches for Whitworth and Stratton under flying seal, so that Auckland may peruse them and inform the Dutch Ministers of their contents. "H.M.'s Ministers are sensible that much doubt may be entertained respecting the real views of the Court of Petersburg in the overture they have made. But it has been felt that these could in no manner so well be ascertained as by acceding to the proposal in the manner now adopted. If either the original intention or the effect of this step on our part induces the Empress to take an active share in a war which seems so little likely to be avoided, a great advantage will be derived from it to the common cause. If she withdraws the sort of overture she has made, no inconvenience can result from the measure taken by the King at all to be put in comparison with the benefit of success. It appears probable that, either on the result of my answer to M. Chauvelin or of the answer to be given in Holland to the French agent there, or perhaps by actual aggression against the [Dutch] Republic, the present situation will be brought to its crisis before the answer from the different Courts can be received. In

that event it would be of the utmost importance that we should be enabled to bring forward to the public view without delay the papers alluded to in Your Excellency's last despatch¹, so as to prove to this country that, at the very moment when M. Chauvelin was giving here fresh assurances respecting the neutrality of the Republic, and was endeavouring to represent the Scheldt as the only cause of war, the French agents in Holland, and even the ostensible Minister of the *soi-disant* Republic of France, were forming plans of attack and urging the French general to execute them without delay."

F.O. Prussia, 27.

EDEN to GRENVILLE.

Berlin, Jan. 1, 1793.

General Möllendorf will soon proceed to the East to take command of the Prussian expedition against Poland. "This business is no longer a mystery here, and it is publicly said that the four bailiwicks of which he is to take possession in Great Poland were the promised price of H.P.M.'s interference in the affairs of France, and that he has now exacted the discharge of the promise with threats of otherwise making a separate peace with France. Russia, it is added, consents with reluctance, induced principally by fear of the Turks. I mention this as the public report. Having more than once represented to the Prussian Ministers the extreme injustice of this measure, and even impolicy at this awful crisis, and having been answered only by miserable elusions, it appears unnecessary to say anything further on the subject."

Brit. Mus. Add. MSS. 34,446.

GRENVILLE to AUCKLAND.

Whitehall, Jan. 4, 1793.

"...There is still the strongest reason to apprehend a disposition in France to proceed to every extremity rather than to give to this country and to Holland the satisfaction which we have a right to expect on the different points in question between us. No account has yet been received here of the light in which my answer to M. Chauvelin has been considered or of the effect it has produced." He believes that Dumouriez's journey to Paris has been "to pursue his plan against the Dutch Republic, about which the Executive Council had expressed hesitation."

Ibid.

SAME to SAME.

Whitehall, Jan. 5, 1793.

"Having this day received the enclosed extract of a communication made to the National Convention by M. Le Brun, I lose no time in transmitting it to Your Excellency in order that the Dutch Government may be informed without delay (supposing they have not received this account directly from Paris) of the great probability which this circumstance affords of an immediate rupture with France." In no case must the Dutch supply naval stores to the French.

¹ See *Dropmore Papers*, II. 360.

F.O. Prussia, 27.

EDEN to GRENVILLE.

[Cypher.]

Berlin, Jan. 5, 1793.

"The Allies mean to continue the war and persevere in the Resolution set forth in the Duke of Brunswick's manifesto, of restoring the monarchical form of government in France under such limitations as may be prescribed by a free Assembly of the States, and re-instating the German Princes in their rights, and, what has not hitherto been openly avowed, declaring that they mean to require a compensation for the expences of the war. A firm hope is expressed that H.M. will become a party in the war."

F.O. Sardinia, 11.

GRENVILLE to TREVOR (at Turin).

Whitehall, Jan. 10, 1793.

"...H.M.'s conduct in abstaining from all interference in the internal affairs of France, and the neutrality which H.M. had observed in the present War, have not had the effect which the King was so justly entitled to expect. The present rulers in France have, notwithstanding those circumstances, adopted measures likely to excite in H.M.'s mind the strongest jealousy and uneasiness. Their conduct has been such as to indicate a fixed design of hostility against H.M. and his Allies, and views of aggression and aggrandisement utterly inconsistent with the general tranquillity and security of Europe. Under these circumstances H.M. feels himself called upon by the most important interests of his subjects to adopt such measures as may be necessary for the security of his own dominions and those of his Allies and for the general interests of Europe. And H.M. is desirous, as far as possible, to adopt a system of concert with the different Powers who have a common interest with H.M. on this subject or who are still more strongly concerned in opposing a barrier to the progress of French arms and French principles.

"At the time when the conduct of France had already been judged by H.M. to be such as to call for vigorous preparations on his part, H.M. received from the Court of Petersburg an overture expressive of the sense which the Empress entertained of the danger with which all Europe was threatened from the designs openly avowed by France and from the recent progress of the French arms, and conveying to H.M. the wish of H.I.M. that a concert might be established on this subject between the Courts of London and Petersburg with a view to provide for the general security of Europe. H.M. was pleased to direct that in answer to this overture I should assure the Minister of H.I.M. that the sentiments and wishes of the King were conformable to those of the Empress, and that H.M. was disposed to enter into such a concert, confining it to the object of opposing the views of aggression and aggrandisement entertained by France, without any view to an interference in the internal affairs of that country. And I expressed H.M.'s wish that some person here might be fully instructed and authorized by the Empress to arrange the detail both of the objects to be pursued and of the measures to be adopted for their attainment. Com-

munications of a similar tendency have been made to the two Courts of Vienna and Berlin; and it is H.M.'s pleasure that you should state to the Sardinian Ministers the purport of what I have already mentioned and express H.M.'s wish that the fullest instructions and powers may be given to such person here as H.S.M. shall be pleased to chuse for that purpose, in order that, if occasion should arise, the King may be enabled to concert with H.S.M. either with respect to terms of pacification or as to operations of war, if the continuance and extension of hostilities should become unavoidable. H.M. wishes in the present moment not to make to H.S.M. any specific proposal with respect to either of these two points, because he is sensible that the determination of H.S.M. with respect to them must in a great degree depend on a concert with those Powers with whom he is joined in the war....

"The general outline of such a plan would be that the Powers now at war with France should enable the neutral Powers engaged in this concert to propose to France terms of accommodation and peace. That the basis of such pacification should be, that France should withdraw her troops within the limits of her own territory, should annul all acts injurious to the rights or governments of other countries, and should give some unequivocal pledge and security of her determination to abstain from fomenting troubles in any other country or from intermeddling in any manner in the internal affairs of other Governments. In return for this, the Powers at war with France might consent on their part to disavow expressly and unequivocally any interference in the internal government of France, and might even consent to establish in the usual mode a correspondence and intercourse with such Power in France with whom they might conclude such an agreement...."

F.O. France, 41.

CHAUVELIN to GRENVILLE.

Londres, Jan. 11, 1793.

"...La République Française ne peut considérer la conduite du Gouvernement Anglais [on the Aliens Bill] que comme une infraction manifeste au Traité de Commerce conclu; qu'en conséquence elle cesse de se croire elle-même obligée par ce Traité, et qu'elle le regarde dès à présent comme rompu et annullé."

F.O. Prussia, 27.

UNSIGNED DRAFT IN GRENVILLE'S WRITING.

[Whitehall], Jan. 12, 1793.

"In the conversations which I had this day with Count Stadion and Baron Jacobi, they both, after delivering the written answers of their two Courts, informed me that they had a further communication to make, but that they had agreed to do it verbally only, and in such a manner that my reply to it (if I made any) might not form part of the official answer to be given to their written communications. They then explained that they had received information from their respective Courts that, with a view to indemnifying them for the expenses of the war, a project had been brought

forward by which Prussia was to obtain an *arrondissement* on the side of Poland, and in return was to withdraw any opposition to the exchange formerly proposed of the Low Countries and Bavaria. Count Stadion read me a paper which contained only reasonings on this subject to prove that the acquisition was beneficial to Austria only as an *arrondissement*, and that it would be a sacrifice in point of revenue, while such an arrangement would on the other hand better answer the views of the Maritime Powers with respect to a barrier against France. Baron Jacobi read out a despatch to him in which this plan was stated, but as a project which still required discussing (particularly with Russia) to ripen it, and on which therefore H.P.M. trusted the King and his Ministers would observe the most profound secrecy.

"I told them both that I was glad they had mentioned this project in the form they had chosen; that I was much better satisfied not to be obliged to enter into any formal or official discussion on the subject of Poland. But that I thought it due to that open communication which I wished to be established between our respective Courts not to omit saying at once and distinctly that the King would never be a party in any concert or plan, one part of which was the gaining a compensation for the expenses of the war from a neutral and unoffending nation. That the King was bound by no engagement of any sort with Poland, but that neither would H.M.'s sentiments suffer him to participate in measures directed to such an object, nor could he hope for the concurrence or support of his people in such a system.

"With respect to indemnification I explained to them the outlines of the plan which Mr Whitworth, Mr Stratton and Sir Jas. Murray are instructed to propose, and added that, if such an offer were made to France and refused by her, it did not seem unreasonable that, in the further prosecution of the war, which would then avowedly be ascribable only to views of aggrandisement on the part of France, some compensation should be looked to by the Powers engaged in it...."

Brit. Mus. Add. MSS. 34,447.

GRENVILLE to SIR JAMES MURRAY.

Whitehall, Jan. 20, 1793.

Expects that rupture will come with France as the French Government insists on terms entirely inconsistent with the Government of this country and H.M.'s dignity and honour. H.M. is making strenuous preparations and hopes to concert plans with Prussia and Austria.

F.O. France, 41.

LEBRUN to GRENVILLE.

Paris, Jan. 25, 1793.

"Le citoyen Chauvelin, Ministre Plénipotentiaire de la République Française, ayant reçu l'ordre de se rendre à Paris¹, j'ai l'honneur de pré-

¹ This proves that Lebrun recalled Chauvelin before he heard of the British order for his withdrawal; also, that Maret in his so-called mission had no official authorisation to touch on *la haute politique*.

venir Votre Excellence que le citoyen Maret, qui aura celui de lui remettre cette Lettre, se rend à Londres pour veiller aux papiers de la Légation et de les mettre en ordre. Je prie Votre Excellence de vouloir bien lui accorder son appui et sa bienveillance dans les circonstances où il croira nécessaire de les réclamer."

APPENDIX B

BRITISH WAR POLICY
(*February 1793 to April 1795*)

Brit. Mus. Add. MSS. 34,447.

MINUTE OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY.

Jan. 28, 1793.

The French islands in the Indian Ocean depend almost entirely on the Cape for provisions. Fear that the Cape may be taken by the French owing to dissensions there. Some means must be taken for its security and that of St Helena. Mauritius and Bourbon should be taken, as the best means of safeguarding India.

Ibid. 34,448.

AUCKLAND to GRENVILLE.

Hague, Feb. 8, 1793.

The Dutch army equalled nearly 50,000 men, but was wholly inexperienced. The chief ruler is lethargic.

F.O. Prussia, 27.

GRENVILLE to EDEN (at Berlin).

Whitehall, Feb. 5, 1793.

"...Since M. Chauvelin's departure, an overture has been received by Lord Auckland from M. Dumouriez, with a proposal for an interview between them as likely to afford the means of maintaining peace. Many difficulties were felt in the way of this proposal, especially as an embargo has now actually taken place on our vessels in the French ports. It was however on the whole thought right to consent to the proposed interview, as it might afford the means of knowing the utmost extent to which France is disposed to go in facilitating an accommodation, and as the delay would at all events be in many respects advantageous to us, and particularly with reference to the defence of the Dutch territory."

An objection to the plan was that it might cause jealousy to those with whom we wished to frame a concert (which perhaps might be the cause of the proposal). Eden will explain at Vienna that H.M. will not be led "to depart from the views and principles stated in the correspondence with M. Chauvelin": and will seek to restore a general peace "on such terms as the Emperor may justly expect." H.M. is ready to frame a formal engagement with Austria and Prussia on the principles which have been opened to those Powers. He will not conclude peace unless France abandons

all her conquests, and renounces "all views of interference on her part in the interior of other countries and all measures of aggression or hostility against them; provided that the Emperor shall on his part engage that, if France shall within the space of two months from this time agree to make peace on the terms above stated, adding to them stipulations for the personal security of Her Most Christian Majesty and her family, the Emperor will consent to such a peace."

Also that if the war continues, both Sovereigns will not make peace save by common consent, "on any terms short of the abandonment of all conquests which France has made or shall hereafter make," and of renunciation of all policy of interference in affairs of other States. A similar proposal will be made to Prussia. H.B.M. objects strongly to the proposals concerning Poland, but will not oppose them by force.

Brit. Mus. Add. MSS. 34,448.

GRENVILLE to AUCKLAND.

Whitehall, Feb. 13, 1793.

As war had been declared by France, H.M. orders that "you should confine yourself to the hearing any proposal which M. Dumouriez may have to make, without expressing in any manner an opinion what terms of conciliation would now be deemed satisfactory under circumstances which have so materially varied. And you will expressly state that you are now only authorized to hear his proposals, to ascertain under what authority they are made, and to transmit them home for H.M.'s consideration."

Ibid.

AUCKLAND to GRENVILLE.

Hague, Feb. 15, 1793.

Joubert arrived with a passport from Dumouriez and stated that "de Maulde on arriving at Antwerp found Commissioners of the French Convention who brought a requisition for Dumouriez to recall de Maulde and to march against those [the Dutch] Provinces; that Dumouriez was preparing to obey and that de Maulde had set out for Paris on the 13th."

F.O. France, 41.

PETITION FROM FRENCH PLANTERS OF SAN DOMINGO
(through the medium of M. Malouet)¹.

Londres, Feb. 25, 1793.

"Les Propriétaires de S. Domingue soussignés, considérant l'oppression et l'anarchie qui dévorent la colonie et leurs propriétés, autorisent Monsieur Malouet, l'un d'eux, de solliciter auprès du Gouvernement anglais la protection et les secours nécessaires pour les en délivrer, s'en rapportant à ses lumières sur les détails et adoptant d'avance les moyens qu'il prendra pour parvenir au succès de leur vœu." [About 70 signatures.]

¹ These letters etc. are not printed in the *Mémoires de Malouet* (Paris, 2 vols. 1874) which contain scarcely a reference to this episode.

F.O. France, 42.

GRENVILLE to MALOUE.

Whitehall, April 3, 1793.

“Je vous envoie, Monsieur, conformément à ce que vous avez désiré, la Minute ci-incluse de ce qui a été convenu dans les conversations que nous avons eu l'honneur, M. Pitt et moi, d'avoir avec vous par rapport à la position de Ste. Domingue, et au vœu manifesté par les propriétaires de la partie Française de cette Isle de recourir à la protection du Roi.”

Ibid.

MALOUE to GRENVILLE.

Londres, 78 Titchfield St., April 4, 1793.

“La Minute de l'acte que vous avez la bonté de me communiquer et les additions qui y ont été faites sont parfaitement conformes aux sentimens que je vous ai exprimés, aux propositions que j'ai eu l'honneur de vous faire et me laissent dans la ligne dont je n'ai pas dû m'écarter. Agréez donc, My Lord, mes remerciemens et la prière que je vous fais de vouloir bien me renvoyer l'acte signé avant le départ de M. de Charmilli qui doit avoir lieu Samedi....”

Ibid.

MINUTE SIGNED BY GRENVILLE.

April 5, [1793].

After stating that Malouet was deputed to the British Government by the planters of St Domingo he continues—“Les Colons sollicitent très humblement de S.M.B. protection et secours à l'effet de chasser de Ste Domingue les usurpateurs de la puissance publique, d'y rétablir un gouvernement légal sous ses auspices, et de conserver la Colonie, jusqu'à ce que son sort futur soit réglé à la conclusion de la paix entre l'Angleterre et la France, époque à laquelle les Colons Français selon les conditions de cette paix rentreront sous la domination d'une autorité légitime en France ou continueront d'obéir à S.M.B. comme à leur souverain, et deviendront sujets de l'Empire Britannique. Les dites propositions ayant été mises sous les yeux de S.M.B., S.M. a bien voulu y accéder et donner aux dits Colons l'assurance de son Intention d'employer ses forces à l'effet ci-dessus mentionné au premier moment que les circonstances le lui permettront.”

Ibid.

GRENVILLE to LEBRUN.

[Draft.]

Whitehall, May 18, 1793.

He received on the 26th his letter and declined to give passports to any person until convinced by the most satisfactory proofs—“qu'elles (les Autorités) ont entièrement changé de Principes et de conduite à l'égard des autres Nations. S.M. ne juge pas apropos de se départir en ce moment de sa détermination de ne pas reconnoître dans les circonstances actuelles une nouvelle forme de gouvernement en France. Mais si on y est réellement disposé à terminer la Guerre qu'on a injustement déclarée à S.M. et à ses Alliés, et à leur donner une juste satisfaction, sûreté, indemnisation, on pourra transmettre par écrit aux Généraux des Armées sur la Frontière les propositions que l'on aura à faire à cet effet; ce moyen de communica-

tion éviteroit les difficultés de forme, et l'on pourroit alors juger de la nature de ces propositions et de l'esprit qui les dirige."

Brit. Mus. Add. MSS. 34,448.

GRENVILLE to STARHEMBERG,

Whitehall, June 26, 1793.

Lord Beauchamp will go to the Headquarters of H.P.M. for an intimate concert on the war, so as to pursue it with vigour. Hopes for an alliance with Prussia on the same terms as with Austria and the Dutch Republic. The promise of the restoration of the conquests formerly made by France on Austria may entail heavy exertions; but H.M. gladly makes them for H.I.M. and hopes for a new barrier for his Belgic lands, but will not bind himself to secure this.

Ibid.

GRENVILLE to EDEN (at Vienna).

Whitehall, July 26, 1793.

Signature of Convention with Prussia between Lord Yarmouth and Lucchesini on same basis as that with Russia. Lucchesini said that, after taking Mainz, the combined armies would separate—64,000 Austrians and nearly 20,000 Germans being under the Emperor and a *limited* co-operation only would take place.

F.O. Spain, 27.

GRENVILLE to ST HELENS.

[Secret.]

Whitehall, July 19, 1793.

The chief bar to Anglo-Spanish friendship is the jealousy at Madrid about the West Indies. England will seek indemnities for the expenses of this war, and they will probably come in part from the West Indies. Spain must surmise that. St Helens will avoid entering into details, but state the general *principle* of indemnity. If this be well received, "Your Excellency may then try the ground of pointing the views of that Court to acquisitions on its own frontiers as preferable to distant conquests, especially in the West Indies, where Spain is already possessed of territory far beyond what the capital or industry of its subjects will enable them to cultivate." No details to be discussed until the Allies have further succeeded.

French politics are so confused that no views can be stated with profit. "Under these circumstances any declaration on the part of the Allied Powers in favour of a particular party or of a particular form of Government in the interior would tend only to unite all those who were opposed to that system, but could not be looked to as affording a reasonable prospect for the establishment of solid peace and permanent security.

"The acknowledgment of the authority claimed by Monsieur as Regent is evidently a measure of the nature which I have described, and as such has been avoided here..:~s"

St Helens is to point Spain towards French territory in preference to the West Indies, or even to Corsica, and to keep out of discussion our views in the West Indies unless there should be a certainty that Spain may

be brought to concur in them, which seems little probable; and to prevent the Court of Madrid from committing itself with any description of *émigrés* or any party in the interior [of France].

Ibid.

SAME to SAME.

Whitehall, Aug. 1, 1793.

The Nootka differences ought to be adjusted without difficulty¹.

"H.M. has no intention of making a settlement at Nootka, nor is there any peculiar advantage in that port which should render Spain desirous of establishing herself there. It appears from the reports of Lieutenants Broughton and Mudge that the port of Nootka is clearly situated on an island, and gives therefore no access to the Continent; that it is by no means a better port for shipping or trade than many others on the same coast, and that the furs are neither better in quality nor so abundant in quantity as on other parts of that coast and of the islands adjacent. The national honour of Great Britain will be satisfied and the rights (as first disputed by Spain) of the King's subjects to settle on those coasts [will] be sufficiently established by the actual restitution of any tract however small, provided it is understood that the intention of the Court of Spain in making such restitution is to restore thereby all that was actually possessed by the British subjects, and that the restitution itself is not accompanied by unjustifiable reserves, or by claims of exclusive possession in the lands immediately adjacent, which render it nugatory." Nootka shall be considered as a port "where it shall be free for the subjects of both nations occasionally to resort and to make temporary buildings for their accommodation, during the time of their being there, but where neither [Power] is to make any permanent settlement or to establish any claim of territorial sovereignty or dominion to the exclusion of the other, but mutually to assist each other in maintaining such free resort and liberty of commerce and residence against any other nation that shall attempt to establish there any claim of sovereignty or dominion."

F.O. Austria, 34.

EDEN to GRENVILLE.

Vienna, Aug. 31, 1793.

The Austrian Minister, Lehrbach, in a first interview with Lucchesini, suggested the Belgic-Bavarian exchange as an equivalent to the Prussian gains in Poland, and as indemnifying Austria for the expenses of the war. Lucchesini expressed great surprise, as Austria had promised to give up that project. If it were pressed, H.P.M. would object to any serious diminution of the power of France as upsetting the balance of Europe.

F.O. Genoa, 6.

PAOLI to DRAKE (at Genoa).

Murato di Nebbio, Oct. 7, 1793.

"... Si S.M.B. veut accepter la Corse sous sa domination directe, alors la forme du Gouvernement pourra être réglée, autant qu'il sera possible, d'une manière analogue à celle de la Grande Bretagne, dont les lois

¹ For the dispute about Nootka Sound, in Vancouver Island, see Rose, *Pitt*, 1. ch. xxv.

should be employed. Her other proposals are equally unreasonable. If she persists, these Powers must defend themselves in their own way. This will bring her to reason and she will then admit the Dutch demand for indemnity and make some contribution towards bringing forward the Prussian force. In that case the Allied conquests in Flanders might go to her in return for a contribution towards the expense of the war. He approves Malmesbury's plan of securing the more limited co-operation of Prussia. Much caution is needed.

Ibid.

SAME to SAME.

[Private.]

Downing St., April 4, 1794.

Approves his plan of making the treaty for the duration of the war. Hopes of a happy issue; chief difficulty will be to arrange with Austria any general distribution of force: as she wants to "keep the Prussians back from any effective share in military operations which can lead to acquisitions."

Ibid.

SAME to SAME.

[Draft.]

Downing St., April 21, 1794.

Directs him, after signing Conventions, to return from the Hague to London to inform Ministers on many points which he may learn at Brussels, and to advise how the Prussian co-operation may take place with the least friction, "in the most efficient manner but on separate plans of attack." Hope that the weakness and slowness of Austria's policy may end with the arrival of the Emperor, which will at least shorten the time of framing plans. Whoever commands her forces, should be impressed with the gravity of the crisis and "the necessity of a solid and substantial union of the Principal Powers." The Duke of York will inform Malmesbury of the inconsistent way in which Austria has acted with respect to the plan framed by Colonel Mack and agreed to in London. Her gains in the Low Countries must be discussed, also the Dutch demands for indemnity which she has so unjustly resisted. All bears on "the main object of H.M.—the keeping together by influence and weight that great Confederation by which alone the designs of France can be resisted, and which, if left to itself, would be too likely to fall to pieces from the jarring interests of the Powers engaged in it." No opinion yet quite formed here as to the best line of operation for the Prussian army: but Ministers favour the line of the Meuse if the line Mosel-Rhine can be fitly defended.

Ibid.

MALMESBURY to GRENVILLE.

London, May 7, 1794.

He reached Brussels on April 26, and saw Thugut and Mercy. He read to them the treaty of the Maritime Powers with Prussia but (as it was not ratified) did not give them a copy. Mercy spoke sensibly of the need of vigour and union and declared this treaty to be one of the best ever signed. Its use would depend on the good faith of H.P.M. and of his advisers, whom he suspected. If the Prussians acted along with the

Austrians "they would inevitably palsy each other." He thought the Belgic provinces a heavy charge to Austria and so would any conquests be on that side.

Thugut was complimentary, but full of jealousy of Prussia and of so many Prussians acting *together* near them. Malmesbury tried to show that H.P.M. was less dangerous employed than unemployed. If not with us, he might be against us.

At Cateau, Malmesbury dined with the Duke of York, and then saw H.I.M. at Catillon, who highly approved the treaty and hoped the Prussian army would be placed on the borders of Luxemburg with its left on Trèves and its right stretching to the Meuse. H.I.M. then said, "We want nothing here but a few more men to put an end to this war; and (with the most spirited animation he said) we must spare neither force nor money in the prosecution of it. We saw the day before yesterday (turning to the Duke of York) to what the British cavalry is equal, and their intrepidity and example will be followed by us all¹. The resources of my monarchy are great. I trust I may rely on the love and fidelity of my subjects, and I cannot call upon them for a proof of that allegiance and affection more...than to come forth on this occasion. I have already made great efforts. I am ready to make more and shall never consider any as too great in this cause."...

F.O. Austria, 37.

GRENVILLE *to* STARHEMBERG.

Dropmore, June 24, 1794.

Ministers have always wished to have the Prussian subsidized army in Flanders where it is much needed: hopes it will soon move there: "Je suppose que l'idée de ne pas séparer les troupes Prussiennes et d'employer avec les 62,000 hommes les 20,000 que S.M.P. doit fournir à S.M.I. par leur traité d'Alliance, sera très-acceptable à S.M.P., mais c'est à la cour de Berlin à en juger. Nous ne pouvons avoir aucune raison de nous y opposer."

The placing of the Prussian army must be decided on the spot by military reasoning. England can do no more to help the Austrian loan. If there are any difficulties they only arise from the rumours occasioned by the departure of H.I.M. from the army.

Ibid.

SAME *to* SAME.

Dropmore, June 28, 1794.

Good news from army. Moira's force has arrived at Ostend. All is being done to hasten the march of the Prussians to the Low Countries, but many difficulties arise, and (in part) from the Austrian Generals themselves. England can spare no more troops for that part.

F.O. Austria, 38.

GRENVILLE *to* SPENCER AND T. GRENVILLE.

Downing St., July 19, 1794.

Need of an explanation at once with the Austrian Court so as to frame a close concert for stopping the French advance and resume offensive

¹ Battle of le Cateau (April 26, 1794).

bility of success, and Count Haugwitz said the other day that if the present overtures, which he heartily condemns, should not meet with a completely favourable reception, H.P.M. would be beyond measure anxious to enter into a concert for prosecuting the war with the utmost vigour...

Ibid.

SAME to SAME.

Berlin, Feb. 28, 1795.

"Though I have no reason to suppose that this Court is less deeply committed with the French than I stated...yet so great is H.P.M.'s personal eagerness to make another campaign that I believe it would be still possible to carry that point in opposition to Prince Henry of Prussia and all the ministers if I were to receive immediate instructions for that purpose.... I have found means to insinuate to H.M....that it was of the highest importance to wait...before any completely decisive step should be taken at Basel. The news...of the spirited exertions of our government and above all the vote for 150,000 seamen produced a very great effect here both on the public in general and on the king in particular. Ever since the receipt of this intelligence H.M.'s manner with me has been unusually gracious and in his private society he constantly expresses his determination to wait as long as possible for our proposal. This he has indeed done in so marked a manner that I am convinced he wishes it should be repeated to me. Prince Henry of Prussia, who probably wishes to destroy every degree of connection between our two Courts, took an opportunity the other day of entering with me into a long discussion on the war, in the course of which he vented his spleen against our ministers, our officers, our soldiers and our whole conduct, and concluded by telling me that England had forced the French to make war and could not now make peace if she were inclined to it; that the continental powers had not an interest to continue the war, that their resources were exhausted and that though by new subsidy treaties it might enable them to keep their troops in the field, it would not make the country amends for the losses it occasioned. This unfriendly language...is totally inconsistent with the daily professions of H.P.M...."

Ibid.

SAME to SAME.

Berlin, April 21, 1795.

"Colonel Calvert arrived here last night and brought me the three despatches from Mr Dundas. Had I received them a few days sooner I may venture to assert that England would have had at her disposal the best appointed army in Europe.... At present this is out of the question, but as I have not yet officially learned the conclusion of the treaty with France, as I know that the king is at heart extremely vexed at the success of the negotiation, and as the Duke of Brunswick gave his opinion that a partial communication of my instructions would certainly produce a good effect, I have determined to endeavour to obtain a private interview with H.P.M. for that purpose. Should this be granted I shall mention in general terms the wish entertained by my Court to renew its connection with Prussia and shall proportion my further communications to the encouragement

I may receive from H.M. At all events the overture will make a very favourable impression on his mind. It will relieve him from the suspicions he has long entertained of H.M. being entirely abandoned by England and sacrificed to the two Imperial Courts, and it will delay if not wholly prevent the alliance which he feels himself under the necessity of contracting with France...."

APPENDIX C

'THE SPANISH CRISIS

(*April 1795—September 1796*)

Those from Grenville are all from Downing Street; those from Bute are from Madrid.

F.O. Spain, 37-42.

GRENVILLE to BUTE.

April 13, 1795.

In spite of the ill humour and despondency of Spain, he hopes that she will persevere to the end of the war. Bute must seek to infuse vigour, especially after the recent Spanish successes in Catalonia. Spain should renew her claims to indemnity from France, which we favour in proportion to the exertions and successes of Spain in war. Bute will protest amicably against any negotiations with France. It is not probable that Spain will propose the renewal of the English alliance in an active form.

"The nature and limits of the respective acquisitions of the two countries in S. Domingo are not sufficiently ascertained to enable me to authorize Your Excellency in the present moment to propose any specific agreement to the Spanish Court with respect to the boundaries to be established to our respective possessions in that island."

JACKSON to GRENVILLE.

Aranjuez, April 15, 1795.

The Spanish Government inclines to reciprocate the wishes for peace recently expressed at Paris. Overtures made in Switzerland, also between opposing Generals in Catalonia. Owing to distress in Spain, Alcedia favours them. Recently he said to Jackson "that H.B.M. ought to have abstained from any interference in S. Domingo, upon the whole of which H.C.M. had a well-founded claim; or that if any enterprize was undertaken there by Great Britain, it should have been in the way of auxiliary to Spain, in order to restore to her her ancient possessions in the West Indies."

GRENVILLE to BUTE.

June 12, 1795.

Encloses instructions for Malouet, who has been appointed British Commissary in S. Domingo, to arrange the claims of the inhabitants in the British part. Desire to satisfy the claims of Spain there.

GRENVILLE to BUTE.

June 15, 1795.

Death of Lewis XVII does not alter their conviction that "the restoration of monarchy in France, if it can be effected, would afford the best prospects of tranquillity both to that country and to the rest of Europe"; but Monsieur will not be recognized as Regent until a sufficient party in his favour is formed in France.

SAME to SAME.

Dec. 25, 1795.

Wish to avoid, if possible, a rupture with Spain despite her arming and her evident partiality to the French. We will not make peace through her. She now complains of our plan to attack them in S. Domingo, as if it were Spanish and not French. Whose is it? She should not complain of our balancing French successes on the Continent by our successes in the French colonies.

BUTE to GRENVILLE.

May 10, 1796.

He protested against French squadron continuing at Cadiz. A Spanish fleet will soon sail for West Indies. Spain is urging Sweden to revive the Armed Neutrality. Denmark seems to agree.

SAME to SAME.

May 18, 1796.

Godoy (Prince of the Peace) says Spanish preparations due to rumours of British schemes against Buenos Ayres and Mexico. Bute denies these, and asks about the reported Franco-Spanish alliance. Godoy says it "is perhaps not far distant." Spain must seek help from France. Bute reports plan of the French squadron to leave Cadiz with a Spanish fleet.

GRENVILLE to BUTE.

June 3, 1796.

Alarm at Godoy's words. England desires friendly relations with Spain. Denmark and Sweden now reluctant to join an Armed Neutrality though French victories in Italy assist that scheme.

SAME to SAME.

June 18, 1796.

We have no designs on Mexico or Buenos Ayres. When S. Domingo becomes French, we may attack it. We must stamp out French principles in the West Indies because they sap the foundation of all European colonies.

BUTE to GRENVILLE.

June 23, 1796.

Godoy spoke to him of the necessary connexion of Spain with France. Bute said that implied war. He expects a rupture, as the French control Godoy.

GRENVILLE to BUTE.

July 15, 1796.

We wish still to conciliate Spain, but her conduct points to a rupture.

BUTE to GRENVILLE.

July 22, 1796.

He thinks that "Spain is actuated by her fears. Those fears engage her, much against her inclination, to go to war with England. She will postpone it as long as the perpetual threats of the French will admit, and even then, unless we force it, [will] not absolutely engage until the several preparations are completed, which will be carried on in the same slow negligent manner." He encloses Godoy's private appeal that the late treaty [of S. Ildefonso] with France may not lead to war.

GRENVILLE to BUTE.

Aug. 26, 1796.

Though Spain has let out the French squadron under the protection of a Spanish force, we will await the result of the overtures at Madrid which give Spain a chance of reconsidering her resolve which can only benefit France. Bute must not leave Madrid without fresh instructions from London or orders from Court of Madrid.

H. DUNDAS to MAJOR-GENERAL FORBES (at S. Domingo).

Aug. 28, 1796.

"Intelligence has been received of the departure of a squadron consisting of 7 French and 19 Spanish ships-of-the-line from Cadiz on the 4th of this month, of which number 9 at present and 2 more after touching at Carthagená are supposed to be destined for S. Domingo. The prevailing influence of French Councils at Madrid, the unfriendly disposition manifested on several late occasions by that Court towards this country and particularly the departure of their fleet in company with that of H.M.'s enemies afford the strongest grounds to apprehend an approaching rupture with Spain." The commander is to be on his guard against Spain; but he is to avoid all hostilities (unless attacked), until authentic news arrives of hostilities.

BUTE to GRENVILLE.

Sept. 10, 1796.

Godoy stated that "Should Spain be obliged to draw her sword against England, one comfort remained—it could not be for any length of time; he hoped soon to see revive the most intimate union." He would never wish Bute to leave Spain. Bute asked "Was it impossible to make matters up? Why not at once form some agreement?" Godoy said Spain had many insults that might justify war, but the war (if it came) could not last, for they ought to be friends.

APPENDIX D

ANGLO-AUSTRIAN RELATIONS

(November 1795—November 1797)

Grenville's despatches are from Downing Street; those from Eden are from Vienna.

EDEN to GRENVILLE.

Nov. 10, 1795.

Thugut says Austria cannot wage an active war unless (1) Great Britain support her with a loan of £3,000,000, (2) Russia help on the Rhine, (3) the Empire form an army on the Lower Rhine. Otherwise she will act defensively, "waiting the effect which the distresses and distractions of France may produce."

SAME to SAME.

Dec. 5, 1795¹.

News of Allied defeat at Loano. He will help Trevor at Turin reassure that Court of Austria's desire to regain its lost territories. Else it may make peace with France in hope of securing part of Milanese.

SAME to SAME.

Jan. 28, 1796.

"A jealousy of the views and sentiments of the Sardinian Government has long existed here, and M. Thugut now expressed his conviction that, if the plan of concluding a separate peace be pursued at Turin, it is with the view of obtaining some compensation on the side of the Milanese for the loss of at least Savoy, the recovery of which he considers as unattainable. . . . And he expressed the wish that, if the King of Sardinia persisted in his negotiation, the arrears of the subsidy due to him from England should be withheld, on the principle that he has not on his part fulfilled the conditions engaged for, and to prevent his having the means increased of acting against this country."

SAME to SAME.

Feb. 27, 1796.

Thugut thought that the proposed Anglo-Austrian Declaration might produce favourable effects on the French nation, but did not, from the principles of the present rulers in France, expect that it would be met by any conciliatory step on their part.

GRENVILLE to EDEN².

March 1, 1796.

Much concerned that the mission of M. de Castel Alfer from Turin to Vienna had aroused "distrust and resentment in the minds of the

¹ For Grenville's important despatch of Dec. 22, 1795 to Eden see Rose, *Napoleonic Studies*, pp. 47-9.

² See also documents in *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, April, 1903.

Austrian Ministry." The defection of Sardinia would be a serious blow. She had striven loyally, and Eden was to represent this.

EDEN to GRENVILLE.

[Most secret.]

March 2, 1796.

Though H.I.M. declined making at this moment the declaration proposed by H.M., yet it was H.I.M.'s intention, at the same time he put an end to the Armistice, to issue a similar paper, stating that H.I.M. took that step in consequence of being actuated by the same sentiments as the King.

SAME to SAME.

March 5, 1796.

H.I.M. was gratified by the frankness of the British Government. "No reliance whatever could be placed on the most solemn assurances of the Prussian Government," and it behoved the two Governments to guard against its bad faith. The assembly of a Prussian army in Westphalia was merely that Prussia might act as arbiter in case of peace. H.I.M. would strive to regain his Netherlands along with Liège; but failing that he must seek another indemnity. "He (Thugut) intimated for this purpose the exchange of the Belgic provinces for part of Bavaria, or even for the Duchy of Würtemberg; in which case these should be guaranteed to the prince put in possession of them." Eden dissented.

SAME to SAME.

March 12, 1796.

"Wretched evasion" shown by Russia in her offers of help. She was absorbed in preparations for a Persian war—a probable prelude to an attack on Turkey.

GRENVILLE to EDEN.

April 12, 1796.

Eden is urged to press on cordial co-operation with the Court of Turin as any "relaxation in the efforts of either Court might lead to consequences the most fatal to the future peace and safety of Europe."

SAME to SAME.

April 29, 1796.

An advance of £100,000 may be made to Austria at once, to relieve the "immediate and pressing distress" of that army.

EDEN to GRENVILLE.

July 21, 1796.

The late unexpected disasters have produced no panic at Vienna. Resolve that Belgium must not remain in French hands. Austria grateful for our help and promise of its continuance. England need not fear an armistice by Austria, unless it became absolutely inevitable.

difficulties in the way of such a negotiation for which France seems rather more disposed than before. But if France is disposed to break off the negotiation, we must still try to bring it to a clear issue. She may cavil as to place, time and mode of the negotiation. Austria must be informed that, if she declines the negotiation, "it might eventually become necessary for H.M. to go even one step further and conclude peace with France, securing only to his Ally the offer at the same time of such terms as the faith of treaties and the King's regard to the general interests of Europe would in such case induce him to require from France. This extreme case would not be resorted to by H.M. without the utmost reluctance and concern." But it may become necessary, and good faith compels us to state the fact.

SAME to SAME.

Nov. 7, 1796.

There ought to be the closest confidence between Great Britain and Austria; but Starhemberg has shown much reluctance to enter into any explanation, and this may arise from Austria entertaining plans unfavourable to us, *e.g.* perhaps on the Belgic-Bavarian exchange. On this Eden will say that H.M. wants Belgium back in Austria's hands, *if solidly held*; for this too is a link of union between Great Britain and Austria. But even that exchange would be duly considered by H.M. as an item in the negotiation if desired by Austria; and the Pays Bas should be in hands able to defend them against France. This is essential to the balance of Europe. Prussia is the only Power except Austria that could hold them: and, if Austria objects to this she should remember that Prussia will oppose the exchange unless she gets a good indemnity; and her interests must be considered in a general settlement. "Any overture to Prussia formed on such grounds, explained with frankness and supported by the joint weight of the Imperial Courts, might possibly be attended with success. Much explanation would be necessary with respect to the various arrangements affecting other parts of the Empire, which might be connected with this idea." In any case Austria must form her decision and formulate her plans without delay.

EDEN to GRENVILLE.

Nov. 16, 1796.

Thugut insists on the need of great caution lest we offend Catharine; but "if it were ascertained that the French would treat with the Emperor on the basis of the *status quo ante bellum* for his dominions, and if the King, in order to fulfil his engagements to the Emperor by the Convention of 1793, should press upon him the acceptance of a negotiation on that basis, H.I.M. must acquiesce in it, and the necessity under which he would then act would be sufficient to justify his conduct in the eyes of the Empress of Russia; but that otherwise it would not be prudent for H.I.M. to take any active or public share in the business without previously concerting it with the Empress."

Thugut feared that Russia was already cooling in her offers of help. Therefore it was impossible "that the Emperor could either send a Pleni-

potentiary to Paris or full powers to Lord Malmesbury to treat in his name or take any positive share in the negotiation until it be ascertained that the Directory has ceased to consider the union to France of the countries conquered from the Emperor as irrevocable, and consented to restore them to H.I.M."

In reply Eden said H.M. had made a long and most honourable series of efforts in the common cause, and the present negotiation must lead either to an honourable peace or fresh energy in conducting the war.

GRENVILLE to EDEN.

[Draft. Most secret.]

Nov. 26, 1796.

French conduct seems to denote a wish to break off; but the state of opinion at Paris compels the Directory to appear to continue. Public opinion there favours the restitution of Pays Bas to Austria if Great Britain will grant to France a sufficient compensation. On these lines the enclosed memoir is drawn up, presuming that the principle of compensations is ultimately agreed to by the Directory.

EDEN to GRENVILLE.

Nov. 26, 1796.

On Eden naming to Thugut the possible alternative of the Pays Bas going to Prussia, he expressed great astonishment and some degree of passion, and said the Emperor would oppose it by force of arms. Austria had rejected French offer of armistice on Rhine, but Austrian Generals insisted on it owing to fatigue of troops.

SAME to SAME.

Dec. 14, 1796.

Death of Catharine a great calamity. Paul offers to fulfil her engagements to Austria; but his first acts arouse distrust. Thugut hopes the British subsidy to Russia will be transferred to Austria.

SAME to SAME.

Dec. 31, 1796.

H.I.M. thanks Great Britain for her care of his interests. If the British proposals are accepted by the Directory, he will send to Paris a plenipotentiary, or will vest Lord Malmesbury with sufficient powers to treat in his name. (This last will be resorted to only if the Directory requires from Austria the recognition of the French Republic.) Thugut insists that Prussia be kept out of the negotiation and be prevented from making any further gain of territory, which (as it must be at expense of the Germanic Body) must cause the dissolution of the Empire. All hope of acquiring Liège is at an end, since the death of Catharine it is no longer attainable without Prussia gaining some equally valuable acquisition.

GRENVILLE to EDEN.

[Most secret.]

Jan. 3, 1797.

Probable that Paul will not help us. But if so, H.M. will advance to Austria a subsidy of £200,000 per month; but the first two months shall

GRENVILLE to EDEN.

April 11, 1797.

Prussia's strange proposal to the Czar will probably incline him towards Austria and Great Britain, unless France persuades him that the Allies are against peace. But we urgently desire it, on the terms and in the way now proposed to H.I.M. He therefore encloses a Note Verbale for Austria and Great Britain to be presented jointly to the Emperor of Russia (in case Austria agrees); also a Note for Whitworth authorizing him to present that Note or a similar one as approved at Vienna.

He then discusses the cession of the Austrian Netherlands to France and fears that the disastrous opening of the campaign makes it inevitable. . .

SAME to SAME.

[Most secret.]

April 11, 1797.

Mr Hammond is sent with this despatch to assist Eden with his thorough knowledge of the situation. "The King confidently relies on the assurances he has received from Vienna that no separate negotiation will have been entered into with the enemy in the interval." But if at the time of Mr Hammond's arrival the Court at Vienna thinks that the delay of a reference to Russia involves too great a risk, the following are the best lines of conduct which seem to be open for them to pursue, and Eden has authority to accede to them:

"The first measure might be to endeavour to conclude a general armistice, avowedly for the purpose of allowing time for the intervention of the Courts of Petersburg and Berlin (as the French would, in such a case, certainly require the adjunction of the latter) extending such armistice to all the belligerent Powers and stipulating respecting the naval war that proper time should be allowed for notices in the distant parts of the world and that no change should be made in the stations of the respective naval forces after the receipt of such notices and until the expiration of the armistice." Eden has full authority to accept such an arrangement. . . .

But H.M. is sensible that the situation may demand immediate negotiation with France, and to avoid unnecessary delay which might seriously prejudice the common interests, he is ready to refer the decision as to the necessity to the Austrian government, which can alone pronounce on the exigency of its own situation. . . .

If the Court of Vienna wishes to proceed to direct negotiations, Eden and Mr Hammond will act as follows:

"You will enter with the Austrian Minister into the fullest and most unreserved discussion of the different points which may come in question respecting the terms of peace both for Great Britain and Austria. With respect to the latter you will remark that from the moment that the resolution is taken by this government to consent to and even to advise the cession of the Netherlands to France, if absolutely necessary as the price of general peace, the most important and pressing interest which this country can possibly have with a view to the affairs of the Continent is that the House of Austria may by some just and adequate compensation

be continued in a situation capable of opposing, as it has hitherto done, a powerful barrier to the ambition of France. But the mode of providing for this must naturally be left to the decision of the Austrian government, and you will therefore explain that your instructions are to co-operate with the views of the Emperor in this respect....

The terms which H.M. would propose are:

(1) Restitution of all conquests except Martinique, which is not nearly the equivalent for the great accession of maritime, commercial and colonial power which France would derive from the possession of the Netherlands and San Domingo. (2) Restitution to Spain of Trinidad, unless it is settled that H.M. retains this with Tobago or St Lucia or some other conquest in the West Indies, in lieu of Martinique. (3) Restitution to Holland of all conquests in the East and West Indies except the Cape and Ceylon, the possession of both which points is of the greatest importance to the defence of the East Indies under the new state of things which would arise in Europe from the possession of the Netherlands by France. (4) Peace for Portugal...."

GRENVILLE to EDEN.

April 11, 1797.

"I hoped before this to have advised you of the Convention with the Emperor, but the question of pecuniary aid can only be brought forward as a part of the general financial arrangements and the loan about to be negotiated. But the loan is delayed and it is not proper that the Convention should be signed before this is settled. To remove disappointment and obviate despondency at the delay you are authorised to give M. Thugut most positive assurances that $3\frac{1}{2}$ millions of the loan are for H.I.M., subject to the consent of Parliament, destined in part for the repayment of advances made by H.M. to the Emperor, and the rest for aid to H.I.M. for the current year. The terms will be made as favourable as possible to the Emperor, though in the great financial distress of this country they must unquestionably be very disadvantageous. The whole will be submitted to Parliament as expeditiously as possible."

GRENVILLE to EDEN AND HAMMOND.

[Most secret.]

April 18, 1797.

"As it is possible that the cession of Trinidad may be repugnant to engagements between France and Spain, you are authorised to accept instead Tobago with either St Lucia or Demerara or the part of S. Domingo held by H.M. when the preliminaries were signed. This is the utmost H.M. thinks proper to concede. But if Vienna is in actual peril the King would consent to confine his demands to Tobago only, which he desires to retain as it is settled wholly by British planters. But in case of extreme necessity, rather than this peace of Austria should be concluded separately, the King will ultimately abandon all claim to West Indian acquisitions, provided the fullest liberty is given to individuals to remove their property. In such case there would be left of the acquisitions only the Cape and Ceylon...."

soit bonne ou mauvaise, elle est faite: l'engagement est pris de traiter de bonne foi pour une paix définitive, et S.M. le remplira comme Elle remplit tous ses autres engagements. Cependant le résultat de cette négociation n'est rien moins que certain. Il se peut que l'ennemi, qui par la désunion qu'il a jeté entre nous se flatte de nous jouer tous les deux, insistera avec nous sur des conditions inadmissibles et continuera à enfreindre, comme il le fait journellement, les stipulations des Préliminaires qu'il a signé[s] avec vous. Dans ce cas nous pourrions encore nous entendre et renouveler sous de plus heureux auspices un concert, qui, s'il avoit été observé de bonne foi de votre part, comme il l'a été de notre part, aurait indubitablement sauvé l'Europe. *Dixi*—et c'est à vous de broder ce cannevas et donner à cette vérité *toute nue* les habits et les ornemens dont elle auroit besoin pour se présenter à des étrangers. Tout à vous."

GRENVILLE to EDEN.

July 23, 1797.

"The long perseverance of the Court of Vienna in its refusal to make to H.M.'s Government any communication of the terms of the separate peace between Austria and France and the unfriendly manner in which that communication was at last made, unaccompanied as it was by any overture or measure which indicated any desire of further co-operation or concert, were among the leading motives which induced H.M.'s servants to advise H.M. to accede to the proposals of France in this respect. The King, having upon this ground entered into that engagement, no longer considers himself at liberty to depart from it, but will observe it with the same good faith with which he has executed on his part all his treaties with his Allies."

EDEN to GRENVILLE.

Aug. 16, 1797.

H.I.M. has professed a desire for union with Great Britain but made no definite offer. As Great Britain had opened negotiations, and the Czar was indifferent as to a Congress, H.I.M. abandoned the idea.

SAME to SAME.

Sept. 16, 1797.

News arrived through Basel of the *coup d'état* of Fructidor. Thugut said this would break up the negotiations at Lille and Udine, and he inveighed bitterly against French perfidy and aggressiveness. He said he was not guilty of signing the Austro-French Preliminaries, "and repeated his opinion that Europe can be saved only by a thorough concert between the King and the Emperor and by the overthrow of the present ruling party in France." He lamented the prospect of an Anglo-French peace, as it must prejudice the chances of Austria obtaining reasonable terms at Udine. The seizure of Corfu by the French harmed both countries, and in case of war a joint expedition should be made by them to recover it.

EDEN to GRENVILLE.

Sept. 18, 1797.

General Meerveldt, who left Udine on Sept. 14, reported that before he left, Bonaparte had been dejected, but on receiving news of the *coup* of Sept. 4 at Paris, was much elated and then declared to the Imperial Ministers that France could not cede what she had promised to Austria in the Preliminaries, and demanded that the Emperor should treat at Udine for peace for the Empire, "evidently aiming to extort by this means the cession of the territory on the left bank of the Rhine as the price of the promised indemnification to H.I.M. in Italy. Bonaparte further declared that the Directory meant to retain Corfu and to annex Venice to the new formed Republic." He urged Austria to make peace on these terms, as France was about to conclude peace with Great Britain.

Thugut said H.I.M. would not treat for the Empire, but would await the news from Lille and the opportunity of a further concert with Great Britain. He also asked whether Spain had offered to conclude separately with Great Britain; and if so, could a British fleet be sent to the Adriatic to secure the transport of supplies to the Austrian army and cover the vulnerable coast of Istria? Cobenzl looks upon Bonaparte "as more than mortal," and combats him feebly.

GRENVILLE to EDEN.

Sept. 22, 1797.

"I have to inform you that the negotiation which was carrying on at Lille has been abruptly terminated by a demand made to Lord Malmesbury by the new French plenipotentiaries, Treilhard and Bonnier... that he should either declare whether or no he had full powers to agree to a complete restitution of all the conquests made by H.M. on France and her Allies, as a preliminary to the negotiation, or should quit Lille in 24 hours. A demand so unreasonable and unexpected undid at once whatever progress had been made in the negotiation and threw the business back to the point from which it had started two months before, and in such a manner as to leave little hope that it can be further pursued with any prospect of success.

"The French plenipotentiaries indeed continued to the conclusion of the very last conference to repeat and enforce in the strongest manner the most distinct assurances that nothing was further from the views of the Directory than an abrupt and unfavourable termination of the negotiation; that they were desirous of pursuing it with the greatest rapidity and to a happy issue; and that the very step which they were now taking was that which appeared to them the best calculated to lead to such an end; that so far from considering the business as completely terminated even by Lord Malmesbury's departure, they still conceived it to be capable of being resumed and prosecuted with success. It is not necessary for me to say that these assurances, however strongly urged, appear wholly incompatible with the conduct which has been pursued by the Directory on the present occasion, and that but faint hopes can be entertained here, under such circumstances of any other issue than a continuation of the war."

EDEN to GRENVILLE.

Nov. 1, 1797.

Thugut told him confidentially that he considered the Austro-French peace so unfavourable to Austria and so vague in its terms that it could not be concluded: that therefore H.I.M. wished to enquire from the British Government as to an eventual compact for the prosecution of the war, Great Britain sending a sufficient naval force to the Mediterranean and furnishing a loan to Austria. H.I.M. would confine "his views of acquisition to the side of Italy, from a wish of preserving the German Empire in its present shape." Eden in reply requested Thugut to state what were Austria's engagements to France. This Thugut refused to do, but he gave a vague outline of the terms. He said H.I.M. would ratify them but would keep his forces up to full strength, as the French troops would probably not evacuate E. Venetia. Eden replied that the fulfilment of Austria's financial responsibilities to Great Britain was a *sine quâ non* to any agreement.

GRENVILLE to EDEN.

[Most secret.]

Nov. 24, 1797.

With reference to Starhemberg's proposal at London, Austria must state her obligations to France, etc., without which no proposal can be discussed. Great Britain and Russia have been kept out of the Austro-French discussions and agreements, probably because H.M. will disapprove them. Repayment of the loan is again insisted on; otherwise Parliament will not agree to any further efforts for Austria.

APPENDIX E

ATTEMPTS TO FORM THE SECOND COALITION (1798)

Grenville's despatches are from Downing Street; those from Eden are from Vienna.

EDEN to GRENVILLE.

Jan. 3, 1798.

H.I.M. orders the repayment of the Austrian loan to Great Britain in certain products (quicksilver, iron, corn, etc.), specie not being available. Eden pointed out that, as France controlled the Adriatic, the export of these was impossible; and long delays would result from this method of barter.

GRENVILLE to EDEN.

Jan. 16, 1798.

Insists on the loan being repaid. The Austro-French peace creates universal disgust. "Europe can be saved only by the union of the four Great Powers." H.M. labours to effect it, but is hindered by the acts of Austria which create distrust.

EDEN to GRENVILLE.

March 10, 1798.

Prussia's subversive proposals *re* Empire at Rastatt. H.I.M. requests her to unite with him to preserve the Empire as far as possible. Reports of the French at Rome. Great alarm at Naples, whose King begs help from Austria. Thugut says if the French attack Naples or Tuscany, H.I.M. will defend them.

GRENVILLE to SIR W. HAMILTON (at Naples).

April 20, 1798.

Hamilton will at once see the Neapolitan Ministers and "convince them in the strongest manner of the zeal and sincerity with which H.M. enters into the interests and feels for the present situation of their Sicilian Majesties."

It would have been impossible for H.M. to witness the plain and undisguised declaration of the French Government of their intention to overwhelm the dominions of H.S.M. without feeling the most lively desire to interfere so far as he might have the means and opportunity to rescue from destruction a Power with whom he has always been anxious to maintain the most friendly intercourse. The discussions which have lately taken place between H.M. and the Court of Vienna respecting the common interests of the two Governments and of Europe lead H.M. to hope that he may find occasion to interfere with effect, provided the period to which his assistance can be afforded be not too remote to prevent the difficulties which appear to be impending over Naples, and he has only to lament that the other Powers of Europe have so tardily awaked to the true sense of their general danger as to leave any doubt upon this point, and to have made it impracticable for him to be either more early in his offers of assistance or more certain of their success. H.M. has come to the determination of sending a fleet into the Mediterranean for the protection of Naples so soon as it is possible for it to be brought forward without detriment to the indispensable objects of his naval service or imminent hazard to the safety of his dominions.

GRENVILLE to EDEN.

April 20, 1798.

Refuses to consider Starhemberg's recent *Mémoire*¹ for an alliance until the loan is repaid. When it is, we will consider a union either with her alone or with Naples. But success will more result from a Quadruple Alliance, including Russia and Prussia. Austria and Prussia must lay aside their jealousies. Great Britain strives to prepare for a Quadruple Alliance. He has explained to Starhemberg the British proposal to be made at Berlin by Elgin so framed as not to betray the confidence of Austria, also for the friendly intervention of Russia. The Quadruple Alliance would guarantee the respective dominions of the four Powers, and possibly also

¹ See *Dropmore Papers*, IV. 154-9.

of the smaller Powers. Meanwhile "the great object appears to be that the plan of pacification for the Empire should be arranged by Austria and Prussia and presented at once as an ultimatum to France." If she refuses, the four Powers should make common cause against her. Our quota would then be partly in the British fleet to be sent into the Mediterranean, partly in pecuniary succours. If Prussia refuses to join, H.M. will make a concert with H.I.M. Austria's pecuniary demands are inadmissible, but H.M. would eventually send a commissioner to Austrian H.Q. to supply her commander with monthly bills on H.M.'s treasury at the rate of £1,000,000 for 12 months, for her armies in Italy and Germany. The general aim must be "that of reducing France within her ancient limits, particularly on the side of the Netherlands and of delivering Holland and Italy from the uncontrolled dominion which she now exerts over them." Fear that Austria may in the future make a separate peace. French attack on England would have the directly opposite effect. H.I.M. is invited to specify a plan of co-operation through Starhemberg.

SAME to SAME.

April 20, 1798.

In view of a possible French invasion, H.M. cannot much weaken his fleet in home waters; for if Earl of St Vincent's fleet were sent into Mediterranean the Spanish fleet might join that at Brest, which would involve the recall of his fleet from the Mediterranean. And to detach only a part of it to that sea would expose it to the Spanish and Toulon fleets. A great increase to the British fleet is therefore necessary: and H.M. will incur that expense so as to be able to send thither an adequate force. Reinforcements to St Vincent's fleet will sail early in June. It must be admitted to any of the Austrian or Neapolitan ports, also into those of Leghorn and Genoa. It is expected that Austria will supply 3000 seamen from her Adriatic ports: also Naples the same number or even more. We cannot guarantee the continuance of that fleet in the Mediterranean indefinitely. Will not Naples seek to induce Spain to come to terms with us and then remain neutral or even join "the general defensive alliance now in agitation"? For this purpose Great Britain was and is ready to sacrifice her recent conquests from Spain. If the latter agrees, H.M. could safely engage to keep an adequate fleet in the Mediterranean during the war.

EDEN to GRENVILLE.

April 28, 1798.

Continued friction between Austria and Prussia on German affairs. Prussia's aims subversive. The Czar's influence on her will be *nil* unless he places an army on her frontier. Thugut fears for the safety of Naples, and thinks the French armament at Genoa [*sic*] is destined for Malta, Sicily or Sardinia¹.

¹ These despatches prove that Bonaparte's Oriental plans had not been surmised at London or Vienna.

GRENVILLE to EDEN.

April 28, 1798.

Bernadotte having left Vienna, and hostilities being imminent, H.M. is ordering St Vincent to send at once to the Mediterranean a force sufficient to hold in check the enemy's force there. Hopes that Austria will appreciate the magnanimity of this step which involves some danger to England. British finances prove the stability and power of the country. Eden must urge the necessity of obtaining for H.M.'s ships free admission to Naples and other Italian ports. St Vincent is at liberty "to treat as hostile all ports and countries in Italy by which these demands shall be refused." Eden to forward a copy of this despatch to Hamilton at Naples.

SAME to SAME.

[Most secret.]

May 15, 1798.

"... In consequence of the publication of the despatches of the American Commissioners at Paris and of the scandalous scene of corruption and insolence there displayed, Congress has resolved on measures of hostility against France." If the Baltic Powers would concur, "there would then remain no neutral flag to protect the commerce or supplies of France."

EDEN to GRENVILLE.

May 23, 1798.

Russia will promote an armed mediation, and will send an army to the Austrian frontier and despatch a fleet to help British fleet in North Sea. Thugut makes little of all this and says Czar is for peace, influenced thereto by Prince Repnin, who believes France irresistible; also by jealousy of Suvoroff whom he does not want to employ. Eden contested these statements but fears them correct. Thugut apprehensive for Germany in case of a war. Eden said Naples must be helped. Italy and Switzerland would probably rise against the French. This would derange their schemes, especially that of the Toulon armada, which Thugut thought might be against the Mediterranean Islands or Egypt, where there is plenty of ready money. H.I.M. urgently desired an entente with Prussia, and for it would see her acquire much land in Germany if it were under the mediation of Russia. Eden again urged the necessity of the Quadruple Alliance, and of the loan being settled. Thugut said this was impossible at present. The Austro-Neapolitan Treaty is a highly gratifying event. If followed up, it must bring a rupture with France, which Thugut expected.

SAME to SAME.

June 23, 1798.

After the arrival of Hamilton's messenger, Eden informed Thugut of "the disposition of the Court of Naples to acquiesce in H.M.'s demands relative to the Mediterranean fleet." Thugut was gratified, and said that "H.I.M. would decidedly support the King of Naples against any consequences that might result, as H.S.M. was already assured of, by the defensive Treaty signed here on the 20th ult. which had arrived at Naples on

the 1st inst. But, on my asking if he would enable me by this opportunity to transmit an answer to my note of Monday last, he requested that it might be deferred till positive accounts arrived of the determination of the Court of Naples, and of the measures adopted there, which, he said, must now be received in a very few days."

SAME to SAME.

July 4, 1798.

After a letter from Hamilton, he regrets the timidity of the Neapolitan Government with regard to the "free and unqualified admission of H.M.'s fleet" into any Neapolitan port. The Austro-Neapolitan Treaty is of the usual defensive character. Gallo objects to it and says H.S.M. cannot ratify it in its present form; and presents a slightly different treaty for consideration, confining the *casus foederis* to a French aggression in Italy. Thugut objects to this as onesided seeing that Austria is *strong* in Italy.

HAMILTON to EDEN.

[Enclosure.]

Naples, June 13, 1798.

Had pointed out that the British fleet could not remain in Mediterranean unless it could enter the Neapolitan ports. Gallo always deferred an answer, and clings to half measures. He (Hamilton) anxiously awaits news from Sicily respecting the French and British fleets.

EDEN to GRENVILLE.

July 10, 1798.

News of seizure of Malta by the French came from Rastatt, where it arrived by telegraph from Paris. Cobenzl made no progress at Rastatt. Naples has not ratified the Treaty with Austria. Eden begs Thugut to conclude some treaty now that Naples is in such danger. Thugut said H.I.M. would not abandon Naples.

SAME to SAME.

July 14, 1798.

A messenger arrived from Naples bringing ratification of the Treaty of May 20. Thugut said both H.I.M. and H.M. should induce Naples to enter into the war eventually. A letter from Hamilton of June 20 stated that Nelson with 14 sail on June 17 appeared off Isle of Caprea (*sic*). Troubridge landed to inquire if Neapolitan ports were open to H.M.'s ships, and "attended Sir W. Hamilton to General Acton, who at length gave him an order in H.S.M.'s name to all the governors of the ports of Sicily to allow the British sick and wounded to be put on shore and taken care of in any of the ports of that island, and also that they might be allowed to get provisions for the fleet from any of these ports."

HAMILTON to GRENVILLE.

Naples, Aug. 4, 1798.

Nelson had missed the French; seven British frigates and a cutter had been for more than a fortnight looking for Nelson, who was very angry

that any difficulty was made by the Government of Syracuse in admitting all the fleet¹. But "the Court of Naples could not without great risk throw off the mask until it had received the ratified Treaty with the Emperor of Germany and with the two supplementary articles by which the Emperor is bound to defend H.S.M. in case of an attack from any enemy, in consequence of his having opened his ports to the King's ships without any limitation; and that Treaty arrived here in the night of the 30th of July and was officially communicated to me the next day by the Marquis di Gallo, the Treaty having been finally concluded at Vienna the 16th of July. As soon as I had received Admiral Nelson's last letters, I shewed them, abuse and all, to General Acton, as His Excellency mentions in his answer to that communication; but I flatter myself, having sent to Sir Horatio Nelson the original letter of General Acton of 1st Aug. that he will be perfectly satisfied, as I am, with this Ministry on this head." He hears that full powers are now given to M. de Circello to conclude a new treaty of alliance with Great Britain. "We already here look upon us as united, and there can be no doubt that the French will resent the King's fleet having been admitted into the port of Syracuse. Why then should the King of Naples hesitate one moment to take advantage of the present discontent and rising of the Roman peasantry, and march on Rome where there are not more than 3000 Poles and French?"

EDEN to GRENVILLE.

Aug. 29, 1798.

Prince Repnin and the Russian ambassador showed a letter from Sandoz-Rollin to his Court [Berlin] stating that France intends war against Austria. Thugut doubts its authenticity and says it is a plot between Prussia and France to feel the pulse of Austria.

GRENVILLE to EDEN.

Sept. 4, 1798.

Russia is ready to aid H.I.M. with troops if war breaks out, if we can help her with funds. Thinks war more remote than is believed at Petersburg. Our measures must depend on the ultimate decision of Austria. We deem it best now to help Austria by Russian troops rather than by a direct subsidy, and have suggested to Paul I to intervene so as to establish a concert between the three Powers. But the ratification and execution by Austria of her financial engagements is an indispensable preliminary.

EDEN to GRENVILLE.

Sept. 5, 1798.

Prince Repnin before his departure assured Morton Eden that he [Eden] must give way on the financial dispute as Austria was desperately low in credit, and must be helped. Eden replied that the former convention must first be fulfilled. He conjured Repnin to persuade Paul I to encourage and stir up Austria; else Naples would be ruined.

¹ Nicolas, Sir N. H., *Dispatches...of Nelson*, III. 25-48; Rose, *Napoleonic Studies*, pp. 350-3.